WORLD / A26

Hospital attacked in Sri Lanka; 49 patients killed

WORLD/ A26

US sacks top commander in Afghanistan

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, May 13, 2009 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 154 P18 website www.inquirer.net

'GMA can run for PM'

House allies confirm likely scenario once Con-ass approved

BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE President Arroyo appears relaxed at the Imperial Palace Waterpark Resort Hotel and Spa in Mactan, Cebu, even as she carries on with the affairs of state. Earlier, she addressed the One Visayas Summit on Climate Change where she said that it is bad for the economy, particularly for the Visayas whose future is in eco-tourism. She stressed that every barangay set up a material recovery facility. (STORY ON PAGE A3) (JOHN BAZZEL)

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO CAN RUN FOR PRIME minister in a parliamentary system being pushed by her allies in the House of Representatives who are seeking to amend the Constitution and are threatening to bypass the Senate in the process.

This was confirmed during yesterday's hearing of the House committee on constitutional amendments by La Union Rep. Victor Ortega when questioned on whether the pending Charter change (Cha-cha) bills do not preclude the incumbent from seeking the highest post in the new form of government.

The Cha-cha debate is expected to come to a head as soon as congressmen start choosing between a constituent assembly (Con-ass) and a so-called "fourth mode" of Charter change starting next week.

Ortega said that the House would put off plenary deliberations on Speaker Prospero Nograles' House Resolution No. 737, which seeks to lift constitutional restrictions on foreign investments through the normal legislative route—the fourth mode.

Ortega said his committee would have to decide first next Tuesday on Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte's House Resolution No. 1109, which is pushing a Con-ass with the Senate and

GMA CAN, A11

Ping makes it official, vows to go after crooks in gov't

By Michael Lim Ubac

ME, TOO "It's 101 percent," Sen. Ping Lacson says of his determination to run for president.

ITS A GO FOR SEN. PANFILO Lacson.

Without further, Lacson yesterday unequivocally declared his intention to seek the presidency in 2010. It will be his second try after 2004.

"It's 101 percent," he said in an ambush interview before the Senate session started. "As of now, I'm really determined, decided to run."

Lacson, a former chief of the Philippine National Police who turns 61 on June 1, said he would run on an anticorruption platform.

He promised to rid the government of crooks and grafters, and to provide "a level playing

PING, A11

5 aspirants will probe Arroyos for corruption

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

WITH THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION only 12 months away, five aspirants have emphatically backed an inquiry into allegations of corruption involving the family of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The declarations of support for an investigation were made for the first time on Monday night at the leadership forum, "Countdown 2010," held at Ateneo de Manila University and hosted by ABS-CBN.

The forum was the first in a series to bring together the crowded field of aspirants who have expressed an intention to run for president, in order to put them under closer scrutiny.

It marked the first public vetting of some of the aspirants and revealed their strengths and weaknesses—an important point in measuring presidential qualities in the search for the post-Arroyo leader.

The test proved to be gruelling for Senators Mar Roxas, Francis Escudero and Richard Gordon, Defense Secretary

5 ASPIRANTS, A11

Change? Group lists a hundred simple ways

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WANT CHANGE? LET US COUNT the ways to do it.

Say "thank you" more often. When driving, slow down on approaching pedestrian lanes. In passenger jeeps, sit closest to the driver; it will be more convenient for incoming riders.

Don't bribe your way out of situations. Don't use a straw if it's not necessary. Discuss national issues with your friends. Register for the 2010 national elections.

These and a hundred other ways to change are listed in the website One Tarpa (www.onetarpa.com), which hopes to create a better country one simple act and one Filipino at a time.

"Changing the country begins with small, concrete actions," said Philip Francisco Ds.

CHANGE A11

Comelec: Automation only in urban areas

By Kristine L. Alave

IT LOOKS LIKELY THAT THERE will be computerized elections next year—but only in some urban areas.

With all seven bidders for the P13.3-billion automation contract disqualified last week, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is looking at the possibility of holding computerized balloting in selected areas—instead of nationwide—rather than go for a negotiated bid.

The participants have filed a motion for reconsideration, but Comelec Chair Jose Melo, apprehensive that no company would win, said he would rather hold a second bidding for partial automated elections.

Melo rejected a negotiated bidding, a suggested fallback by some Comelec officials.

"We will be criticized for it," Melo said.

COMELEC A10

Pacquiao's peace job: Grace AFP vs MILF cage tilts

By Christian V. Esguerra

MACTAN ISLAND—WHAT EXACTly does an ambassador for "peace and understanding" do?

Malacañang yesterday spelled out—though still vaguely—the latest job description of boxing icon Manny Pacquiao under the

PACQUIAO'S A11

'IDOLS' David Cook (right) and David Archuleta Season 7 winner and finalist, respectively of the wildly popular "American Idol" arrive here for a concert at the SM Mall of Asia grounds in Pasay on May 16. (See story on Page A8.) (JOSEY MENDOZA)

WHO exec's 10 other child victims sought

By Tarra Quismundo

POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR other children who may have been sexually molested by an Australian, confirmed to be an employee of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Marcus Hodge, 47, was arrested on Friday for allegedly molesting a 12-year-old boy inside his parked car at a posh Makati City address.

WHO EXEC'S A10

A(H1N1) hits Thailand, 2 others

MEXICO CITY—THE SWINE FLU virus has spread to 33 countries and, according to the latest estimate of scientists, the new strain may have sickened 23,000 people in Mexico alone before anyone realized it was an epidemic.

Thailand, Finland and Cuba on Tuesday became the latest countries to report their first swine flu cases as Fidel Castro accused Mexico of hiding the epidemic until after US President Barack Obama's visit last month.

Even so, Mexico's Health Secretary Jose Cordova insisted an avalanche of A(H1N1) influenza cases had been averted with his nation's shutdown of schools. The shutdown was lifted in some of the country's 31 states on Monday.

A(H1N1) HITS, A11

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2* 10 25 / 10 25

SUERTRES* 3 9 6 / 6 5 1 / 5 6 3

SIX DIGIT* 9 6 5 1 8 0

6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN 2 4 11 32 39 39 — P7,669,756.80

SUPERLOTTO 6/49 5 28 37 38 42 49 — P82,257,523.20

Antidrug courts proposed

Chief Justice eyes nat'l summit to wipe out drug problem

By Philip C. Tubeza

AFTER GETTING HIS MORAL FORCE MOVEment against corrupt governance off the ground, Chief Justice Reynato Puno is training his sights on the war against illegal drugs, in particular, the prosecution aspect of it.

Puno has proposed the holding of a national summit on illegal drugs in order to ensure a "handpaksyon-type" road that would orchestrate try-drug cases, Congressmen Diego Beard Clare Vernon Sotto III said yesterday.

He has also proposed the establishment of corporate penitentiary exclusively for drug offenders to unlike in isolate them from their drug networks, Sotto said.

The Supreme senator, who attended a hearing of the House committee on dangerous drugs, said he had informed President Macapagal-Arroyo about Puno's proposal and she was "100 percent supportive" of it.

He said they were just waiting for an opening in the President's schedule to set the summit, which would be held in the last week of May or in early June.

The more bungling of drug cases, particularly the smuggling of high and powerful personalities, apparently influenced the chief justice, Sotto said.

"The chief justice wants to support the government in the pursuit of victory over big-time drug dealers and drug lords," Sotto said.

He said he had "a very lengthy talk" with Puno before

PUNO

Holy Week last month.

"He's proposing a three-member (court) like (each division of) the Sandiganbayan, (which) is institutionalize this special court for drug cases only and not just designate courts to try drug cases like what's happening now," Sotto said.

"The will be more effective. Malaya kasupin ang nahuli's hands to have to talk to these people," he said, alluding to perceptions of corruption in the judiciary.

His committee elicited candid from the law enforcement officers present at the hearing.

Puno, Sotto said, has "seen the problems" of drug lords getting away after their convictions are reversed on appeal.

"He has seen the problem. From the prosecutor to the judges to the Court of Appeals. It's there that the cases are overturned. The government is not having success," Sotto said.

"And these cases will not go through the Court of Appeals. (Cases) to the special drug court) will go to the supreme appeal to the Supreme Court," he said.

Isolated prison

Sotto said the special court would have homeless nature, with "not the ninty-ninty will be discussed at the drug summit."

He said Puno also proposed the establishment of a "separate and isolated national prison-type" to separate drug offenders from their drug networks.

"This is because, currently, in (the) national (penitentiary in) Muntinlupa, (the) Bureau (penal colony) and in our jails, drug lords still operate using cell phones. Those cell phones are smuggled in," Sotto said.

"Now, if we have a special penitentiary and (there) no cell site, it would be isolated and their (drug operations behind bars) will not happen. Once we get them, their drug trafficking does not exist," he said.

Sotto said he had talked to South Goodtaxi Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio and she agreed "to file a bill on this."

Special prosecutor

At yesterday's hearing, the House committee on dangerous drugs approved the creation of an Office of the Special Prosecutor for Dangerous Drugs (OSPDD) that would exclusively handle the big and controversial drug cases.

The committee, headed by Bicol Saro Rep. Rodolfo Abaz, overwhelmingly approved the bill that was filed by Pasaytaque City Rep. Bobi Gotiz.

"This will help avoid a repeat of the Alabang Boys scandal and the other controversial drug cases around the country," Sotto said.

The "Alabang Boys" case involves the names of three prominent families who were arrested for drug pushing and possession but were released after the recommended by Department of Justice prosecutors.

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) charged that the prosecutors might have been bribed to let the young men go.

The suspects are still in jail awaiting the court of their trial.

No to politics

For his part, Gotiz said he hoped the OSPDD—which would be under the Office of the President and have an initial budget of P200 million—would be "insulated" from politics since it would have to "investigate or initiate court action" against drug offenders who may include government officials.

The proposed new office will be the "chief prosecutor arm of the government for dangerous drugs," he said.

"We should prevent the contamination of the Philippines from a democratic state, the human of democracy in Asia, into a narco-state of kids with (1.7 million Filipino-sizes," Gotiz said.

"We should arm the OSPDD with all the support in law and funding to implement the intent of the measure. An initial budget of P200 million is provided, a pittance compared to the humongous (narco-drug lords) loses. A level-one operator is said to earn P200 million a month or P2.4 billion a year," he said.

The committee also approved additional funds to fight drugs for the Bureau of Customs (P15 million), Department of National Defense (P30 million), and P50 million each for the PDEA, National Bureau of Investigation and Philippine National Police. With Rue Ann S. Somorin

24 more RP seamen freed

By Cynthia G. Balana

TWO MORE VESSELS WITH 24 Filipino seafarers on board were released by Somali pirates on Saturday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) announced yesterday.

The DFA said the 32,000-tone Philippine Guria, with 24 seafarers on board, was freed by hijackers. Four of the vessel's crew are Filipinos.

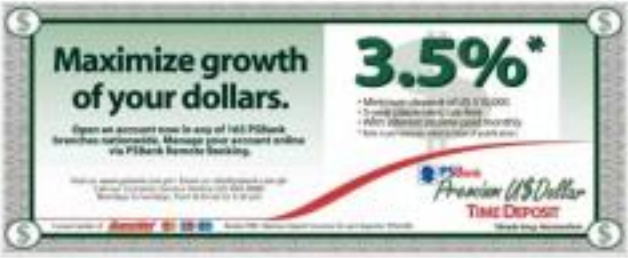
The Italian-operated vessel was seized by pirates in the Gulf of Aden last April 6.

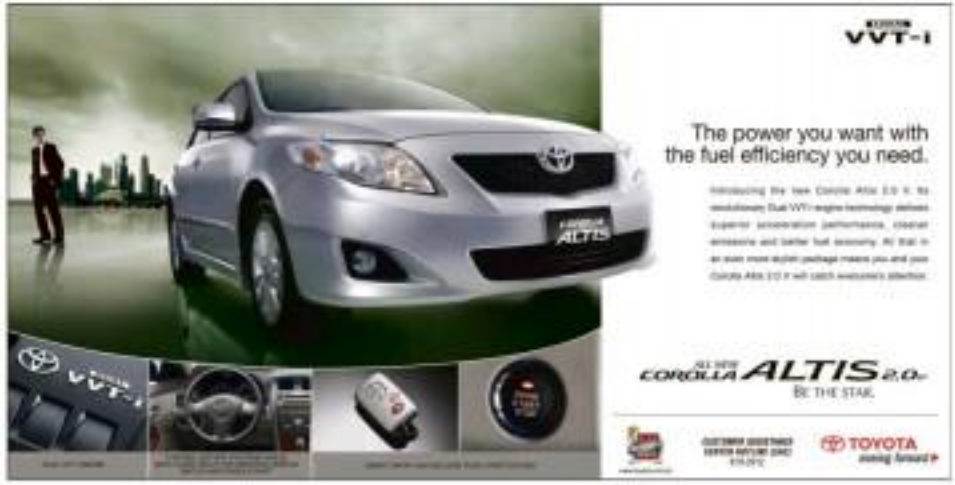
Greek-owned Mijnda, hijacked last March 23, was also released by pirates on the same day. It has 18 Filipino seafarers. "All Filipino crew of the freed vessels are well and in good condition," the DFA said.

DFA is still awaiting details of the repatriation of the Filipino crew members of the two vessels," the DFA said.

Filipino seafarers on board three other hijacked vessels namely, MV Saldanha, Philippine-flagged MT Stolt Strength, and M/V Titan have arrived in Manila.

A total of 53 Filipino seamen are still in the hands of Somali pirates. The DFA said the government has been coordinating with the monitoring agencies of the ships said. Efforts to secure their safe release.





Correction

BY THE WAY 11 DOCH, a story on Page A-23—"Rebel Marine officer eyes Senate seat"—misnamed the surname of Marlon Ord. Ariel Querubin's spokesperson and their relationship. The spokesperson's name is Silvia Luna... not Querubin. He is Querubin's surgeon.

* * *

Reader's may send their requests for correction of facts and errors to: ombudsman@inquirer.com.ph. Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to the Publisher. E-mail address: [illegible]. Telephone numbers: 897-47-54 to 64, local 280. Fax: 897-47-92/96. Note: The Publisher. His phone number is 897-5000 local 280.

Unemployment rate now at 34.2%, says SWS survey

UNEMPLOYMENT ROSE/HELD. A record high of 34.2 percent in February, according to a survey by the Social Weather Stations.

This means an estimated 14 million were unemployed, a considerable rise from the previous quarter's 27.5 percent or estimated 11 million adults, according to the SWS's First Quarter 2009 survey.

Of the unemployed, 13 percent voluntarily left their old jobs, while 11 percent were retrenched...some percent who were laid off and those percent whose contracts expired and/were not renewed.

Over 20% since 2005

"Adult unemployment in the SWS surveys has been 20 percent and above since May 2005, except for December 2007 when it was 17.5 percent," SWS said in a statement.

"In the SWS data series adults began in 1995, unemployment was below 15 percent until March 2004,

and then ranged from 16.3 percent to 19 percent from August 2004 to March 2005," SWS also noted.

Regarding the job history of the unemployed, SWS said that over the past four quarters, adult unemployment was dominated by those who voluntarily left their jobs, and those who were retrenched.

Defining unemployment

In the latest survey, 13 percent had left their old jobs voluntarily, nine percent were laid off, three percent had their contracts finished and not renewed and three percent said their employers closed operation. Six percent never worked before at the time of the survey.

SWS defines unemployment as those respondents 18 years old and above who are not working and at the same time looking for work. Those not looking for work such as housewives, students and retired or disabled persons were not included.

This definition is different from the official definition of the National Statistical Coordination Board which "include all persons who are 15 years and over" and are reported as (1) without work and currently available for work and seeking work; or (2) without work and currently available for work but not seeking work."

If the official definition were applied, the unemployment among 15 years old and above in the first quarter survey would be lower at 25.9 percent...SWS said.

The National Statistics Coordination Board has found the country's unemployment rate at only 7.7 percent in its January 2009 web post.

The SWS survey was conducted on Feb. 20 to 23 and used face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults in Metro Manila, Luzon outside Metro Manila, Visayas and Mindanao, with a margin of error of plus-or-minus 2.5 percentage points.

DepEd suspends noodle purchase

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION has suspended its purchase of P427 million worth of instant noodles from a supplier amid allegations raised in a Senate hearing that the food items were overpriced and lacked nutritive value.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus also informed Sen. Mar Roxas, chair of the education committee, in a May 11 letter that he has also ordered a review of the department's school feeding program.

The announcement came during the Senate inquiry into the allegedly overpriced instant noodles purchased with mungbean and eggs that Jeonjo Manufacturing Corp. has been supplying the DepEd.

Lapus said the review of the school feeding program would be conducted with the help of independent experts "with the objective of resolving questions such as nutritional content, cost-effectiveness and efficiency of field implementation." The review is supposed to finish by next month.

Roxas was glad that Lapus had suspended the signing of the contract with Jeonjo, Roxas yesterday announced that his committee would defer the inquiry into the controversy but would monitor the review of the school feeding program.

Roxas said the two hearings showed that the Jeonjo instant noodles priced at P22 for each 100-gram packet was overpriced when compared to other noodles in the market.

This article has been edited to remove a paragraph that was published in error.

Lozada thanks senators, but...

By Michael Lim Ubac

WHISTLE-BLOWER RODOLFO Lozada Jr. came to the Senate yesterday to personally thank the members who instigated his release from the Manila city jail late last week, after he had been arrested on contempt charges.

Lozada beamed as he stepped on the Senate floor after arriving late before the 3 p.m. session.

"I am very thankful ... as this is my chance to thank the senators one by one," he said.

He approached the early birds of the chamber, first Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino II, then Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada, followed by Panfilo Lacson, Gregorio Honasan III and Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile.

The first...along with chief detainee reporter Nikko Dizon, Francis Pangilinan, Jamby Madrigal, Rodolfo Biazon and Loren Legarda...had signed the motion seeking the return of Lozada to Senate custody that was filed on May 4 by Sen. Mar Roxas.

Lozada conspicuously passed by minority Senators Aquino Jr. and Francis Pangilinan, although both also were in their seats before the session started.

Lozada did talk, however, with Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and watches member of the minority Alan Peter Cayetano, who both visited him in jail last week.

Lozada told reporters later he did not intend to approach all 23 senators.

"Only long ...*continued*/only those who stayed (*pinirmihan*)," he said, bursting his laughter.

Asked who he avoided, he replied: "Wag na, intrigahin ninyo sarili (Forget it, you're going to get me in trouble). As I said, I am thankful."

He said he did not feel vindicated of the perjury charge against him because his release order only talked about movement of his person.

The Senate originally had custody of Lozada by virtue of his being the star witness in a committee investigation of the supposed National Broadband Network deal with ZTE Corp. of China, which he alleged was riddled with corruption in the highest echelons of government.

Former presidential chief of staff Mike Defensor, however, filed a complaint for perjury against Lozada for allegedly saying that he (Defensor) had tried to convince Lozada to lie about his supposed kidnapping by government agents on his return to the country from Hong Kong to testify in the Senate.

RP seen to improve anticorruption rating

THE PRESIDENTIAL ANTI-Graft Commission (PAGC) expects an improvement in the Philippines' ranking in international corruption surveys with the implementation of government agencies' moral renewal action plans starting tomorrow.

The action plans were formulated according to the results of a moderated workshop conducted in Malacañang on March 5, and "all members sincere and determined government-wide efforts" to promote integrity in public service, PAGC chief Constantino Gumban said in a statement.

The implementation of the "agency-specific" action plans is in compliance with President Macapagal-Arroyo's Administrative Order No. 255 on moral renewal in government, Mr. Gumban said.

According to Dr. Gumban, Mr. Arroyo's anticorruption campaign began on April 26, 2001, when she formed the PAGC. In 2004, she made the campaign her centerpiece program of governance, as highlighted by the formulation of the Integrity Development Action Plan (Idap) by the PAGC and civil society groups in consultation with her Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan.

The number of government agencies implementing the Idap has risen from 39 in 2005 to 156 in 2008, Dr. Gumban said.

She said the number would "definitely increase in every all government agencies in the executive branch as they implement their respective moral renewal action plans."

Regus

Flexible offices from just PHP 9,700

per person per month

- Office spaces from 5 - 500 sqm
- Flexible terms to suit your needs
- Meeting rooms & virtual offices
- Business lounges

Call +632 849 3489 or visit regus.com.ph

Free

Get the BEST DEAL this May!

FREE LG Cookie PLUS a DVD Player at Plan 1200!

LG KP500 Cookie Features:

3" Full Touch Screen • GPRS • EDGE • Email • Organizer • Document Viewer • Handwriting and Editing • 3.15 MP Camera • Video Recording MP3 Player • MPEG4 Player • Bluetooth

Offer also available in Plans 250, 500 and 800 with cashout.

LG KP500 Cookie

Free

LG DVD Player

Chat, download and surf wherever you go with the new MOBILE SURFING PLANS! Just add a minimal fee for as low as Plan 149

LG Life's Good

Know Globe, the LEADER in Postpaid. Flexible Offers, Rewarding Deals.

Globe PLANS

Great Sights, Great Value Flights!

SHANGHAI FOR AS LOW AS USD190**

HONG KONG FOR AS LOW AS USD190**

HO CHI MINH CITY FOR AS LOW AS USD152**

SINGAPORE FOR AS LOW AS USD233**

JAKARTA FOR AS LOW AS USD184**

TAIPEI FOR AS LOW AS USD276**

HONOLULU FOR AS LOW AS USD567**

BANGKOK FOR AS LOW AS USD146**

GUAM FOR AS LOW AS USD244**

BEIJING FOR AS LOW AS USD278**

MACAU FOR AS LOW AS USD264**

SAN FRANCISCO FOR AS LOW AS USD947**

XIAMEN FOR AS LOW AS USD238**

LAS VEGAS FOR AS LOW AS USD915**

VANCOUVER FOR AS LOW AS USD934**

LOS ANGELES FOR AS LOW AS USD931**

SYDNEY FOR AS LOW AS USD608**

MELBOURNE FOR AS LOW AS USD593**

Oh Singapore!

PACKAGE INCLUDES:
- Round-trip Fiesta Class airfare from Manila
- Airport transfers and daily breakfast in most destinations
- Hotel Accommodation
- City tour in Bangkok, Beijing (until October 2009 only), Hong Kong, Honolulu, Macau and Taipei only

Low season prices above are per person, based on twin-sharing accommodation and are subject to change without prior notice.
Package prices are valid until March 31, 2010 (unless otherwise specified).
Validity, departure dates and ticketing deadlines vary.
Seats subject to availability.
Surcharges, fees, taxes and restrictions apply.

For bookings and inquiries, please call PAL Reservations Manila (02) 855-7777, Cebu (032) 340-0197, Davao (082) 222-0366 or your travel agent

68 Years of Leadership

Philippine Airlines
WITH US, YOU'RE ALWAYS NO. 1
www.philippineairlines.com
ABC No. P2007004288P

KITANG KITA ang KITA! Sa bagong Chana Multi-Carry, siguradong may kabalikat ka na sa iyong negosyo!

Closed Van P 280,000

Panoramic Van P 415,000

Pick Up P 280,000

NEGOSYO BUDDIES KASOSYO SA LAHAT

CHANA

SC grants clemency to disbarred lawyer

By Herman Bordadora

THE SUPREME COURT HAS PARtially granted a lawyer's petition for clemency, more than five years after he was disbarred for leaking bar examination questions to his borrowing brothers in 2003.

In a nine-page resolution, the Supreme Court reinstated lawyer Emelio de Guzman's disbarment to a seven-year suspension from the practice of law. The suspension would be counted from the day he was penalized in 2004.

The Office of the Bar Confidant recommended De Guzman's reinstatement in January 2009, saying the petitioner was "of good moral repute, not only before but likewise after his disbarment, as attested to overwhelmingly by his constituents, colleagues as well as people of known probity in the community and society."

De Guzman, according to the OBC, served as a consultant of the city government of Tagaig and a member of the Dangle's Law Enforcement Board.

It added that De Guzman "demonstrated an unwavering public service" for the next five years after his disbarment.

"Petitioner has sufficiently demonstrated the remorse expected of him considering the gravity of his transgressions," the Supreme Court said.

It added that statements solicited by De Guzman's peers and esteemed lawyers, such as retired Court of Appeals Justice Oscar Herrera, Judge Hilario Lajar among others, "testify to his genuine reformation or, at large since the unfortunate events of 2003."

"Petitioner's subsequent track record in public service affords the Court some hope that if he were to reacquire membership in the Philippine bar, his achievements as a lawyer would redound to the general good and more than mitigate the stain on his record," the Court said.

"Circumspection in the petitioner is warranted," it added.

De Guzman, a legal assistant of 2003 bar examinee Marisol Bedoya, was found to have scanned examination questions on Bedoya's computer. He then gave copies to his fraternity brothers in the Manuel L. Quezon University.

Investigators showed that the copies of the examination questions on mercantile law were distributed to members of BELTA's Beta Sigma Lambda who took the bar in 2003.

Reasons why you should study in Australia
- Competitive tuition fees
- World-class education
- Opportunity for part-time work while studying
- Hundreds of course choices

idp

Study in Australia
...and change the course of your life.

Attend the
Australian Education Exhibition 2009
and get a chance to talk to Australian institution representatives about how you can study in Australia.
Please bring transcripts if available.

Cebu City
18 May 2009 (Friday)
Cebu Marriott Hotel
10:1am Seminar
1:0pm Exhibition

Makati City
16 May 2009 (Saturday)
Holiday Inn Manila Pavilion
1:0pm Seminar
1:0pm Exhibition

FREE ADMISSION
Pre-registration is required for free seminars.
To pre-register, please contact:
Manila Tel: (02) 818 0755 local 116, 101 or 102
Email: alma.galvez@idp.com
Cebu Tel: (032) 236 2758
Email: rica.velasco@idp.com

Supported by:
Australian Government
Australian Trade Commission

Participating Institutions: ANU Education • Australian Catholic University • ACU • Central Queensland University • Curtin International College • Curtin University of Technology • Edith Cowan University • Flinders University • IHBT • IHMT • Le Cordon Bleu • MEGT Institute • Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE • Monash University • TAFE NSW • TAFE Western Australia • UWA Manila MBA • University of Ballarat • University of Melbourne • University of New England • University of Newcastle • University of South Australia • William Angliss Institute of TAFE

Erap pal blocks auction of Jose Velarde assets

By Edsor C. Tordesillas

BUSINESSMAN WILLIAM GATCHALIAN'S Wellex Group yesterday succeeded in blocking the auction of P88 million shares of stock that were seized from deposed President Joseph Estrada's Jose Velarde account and which the group claimed is ours.

The Sandiganbayan Seventh Anti-Graft Division yesterday decided to temporarily suspend the scheduled May 15 auction of the 880 million shares of Wincorp Pilipinas, a company under the Wellex Group, after the latter filed a complaint with the Makati regional trial court seeking to halt the sale.

Gatchalian, a friend of the former President, heads Wellex.

"We have reached an agreement to treat the matters," said Chief Sheriff Edgardo Llanza.

The Wellex Group claims are among the assets in the Jose Velarde account that the sheriff had confiscated following the anti-graft court's ruling ordering the forfeiture of P189.7 million worth of assets in the account in favor of the government.

In its complaint, Wellex said the court directed "did not authorize [the Sandiganbayan sheriff] to take control and possession of the subject shares of stocks, much less to sell the same at public auction."

Wellex argued that the Wincorp shares were not part of the Jose Velarde account.

Documents at the Makati trial of Estrada said the Wincorp shares had served as the collateral for a P10B million loan that Wellex took from the Jose Velarde account, which had remained unpaid.

Wellex claimed it had already settled the loan with Asset Delivery, the businessman that Estrada claimed to be the real Jose Velarde and owner of the account.

The loan been refused by Banco de Oro, which holds the Jose Velarde account. It said Wellex's P500 million obligation remained outstanding in its books.

In its September 2007 judgment which found Estrada guilty of plunder, the Sandiganbayan said that Estrada was the "real and beneficial owner" of the account in the name of Jose Velarde as the September PCIBank (which has since been acquired by Banco de Oro) and subsequent seizure of P189.7 million worth of assets found in the Velarde account.

Last month, Llanza's office seized cash deposits and stocks from the Velarde account and announced that it would auction off the 880 million worth of Wincorp stock, estimated to be worth P117 million at the time.

3 foreigners with fake papers deported

By Marlon Ramos

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION (BI) YESterday ordered the deportation of three foreigners who were caught with fake travel papers.

BI Commissioner Marcelino Libanan identified the three "undesirable aliens" as Dahlawi Ibrahim Ahmed, 32, Qamar Qaseng and Mahyuian Thanthi Ary Hamzah.

In a statement, Libanan said the three were arrested on separate occasions at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport for presenting fake passports.

Libanan said a syndicate involved in human trafficking could have facilitated their arrival.

"We have repeatedly warned them that human trafficking syndicates to stop using the Philippines as a transit point," Libanan said, adding, "We will not allow their victims to become through our ports connected or undetected.

According to the immigration chief, the BI's Board of Commissioners issued deportation orders for the three foreigners last May 5.

They were fined P50,000 each and were barred from returning to the country.

Ray Alcuaz, BI associate commissioner, said the aliens were arrested at the airport by elements of the agency's Migration Complement and Human Trafficking Group.

Dhanapal was offloaded from a plane bound for The Netherlands after immigration agents seized an altered Malaysian passport from him.

Ahamed was arrested on Feb. 4 for carrying a fake Australian visa just minutes before his scheduled flight to Sydney.

"When investigated, Dr. Pakistani alleged that he got his fake visa from a certain Hall Hinos, a Filipino," Alcuaz said.

Huang, on the other hand, was arrested on April 23, shortly after his arrival from Hong Kong. He told investigators he paid a fixer in Beijing P400,000 for a Philippine passport.

SHARP
IMAGE SOLUTIONS
Your Multi-Task Partner

HIGH VOLUME PRODUCTION PRINTING/COPYING
VARIABLE DATA PRINTING SOLUTIONS
FAX SERVER SOLUTIONS
2 IN 1 MICROFILM TO DIGITAL SOLUTIONS
IT SUPPORT SERVICES
ACCEPTING OUTSOURCED BUSINESS SERVICES
DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS
SHARP FULL COLOR / BLACK & WHITE MULTI TASKING PORTALS

WORK WITHOUT LIMITS

With e-Copy's Business Solutions and Sharp's Multi Tasking Portals, Pure Open System Architectures, your business opportunities and possibilities are endless.

- FREE Lifetime Service & Warranty on parts under SCS+Agreement
- 3 Hour Repair Service with e-Copy's Mobile Technicians
- Offers BEST in Class-To-Class digital copiers, Accepts TRADE-IN

e Copy
CONQUEROR
the right choice for smart businesses.

e Copy

Call Center: 525-9911 loc. 104/105
6827 Zobel Roxas Street, Palanan, Makati City
Fax: 525-9880 - Sales • Fax: 525-9870 - Service, Parts & Genuine Consumables
e-mail: info@ecopy.com.ph • website: www.ecopy.com.ph

Army intel officer is new PSG chief

By TJ Burgonio

MACTAN, CEBU—AN ARMY OFFICER who made his mark in intelligence work has been named by President Macapagal-Arroyo as her chief security officer with the retirement of Brig. Gen. Celbrando Buquiden.

Col. Jesus Sumagaysay took over Buquiden's post as chief of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) in ceremonies close witnessed by Armed Forces chief Gen. Victor Ibrado at the Shidecahang Park yesterday.

Sumagaysay, who served as PSG commander for nearly a year, reached his mandatory retirement age of 56 yesterday. He is a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1978.

Sumagaysay, who was deputy brigade commander of the Army's 302nd brigade before his appointment, would most likely serve Ms Arroyo's remaining 11 months in office. He belongs to PMA Class of 1981.

"Sumagaysay is one of the best intelligence officers in the Armed Forces. He's soft-spoken, but very deliberate and loyal," Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said in a briefing here.

Sumagaysay is a former aide-de-camp to Gen. Remonde said in a briefing here.

"He's very easy to get along with, mild-mannered but decisive in all his actions. Those traits are the traits considerations he was chosen. All these traits are necessary to become a good PSG commander," Remonde said.

Sumagaysay took over as PSG commander on June 5 last year, and presided over an elite unit for the next 11 months in a relatively peaceful period of the scandal-hounded Arroyo administration.

"To be honest, there wasn't much struggle. The situation was very normal. I performed mostly administrative activities," Sumagaysay said in a phone interview last Saturday. "My term as PSG commander was very smooth-flowing."

Unlike his predecessors, Buquiden said he never had to deal with "reasons of detachment."

During his time, the PSG only made news after the Bell 412 presidential chopper crashed in the jungles of Bugoso on April 7 that killed eight presidential aides.

In his job, Gen entailed drawing up elaborate security plans for the President and visiting heads of state. Buquiden said he would never forget the occasions when Ms Arroyo awarded congratulate the PSG for a "job well done."

"The President is very generous in appreciating the services of the PSG," he said.

In his successor, he said: "It's a nice privilege to be serving the President of the country."

HONGKONG $238
AUSTRALIA $788
NEPAL $928
BANGKOK $175
SHANGHAI $329
SINGAPORE $235
SIEMREAP $699
VIETNAM $317
BORACAY $2499
JAPAN $796
WORLD WINGS
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURS CORPORATION

Introducing the latest
ziller
MTV EDITION
ZILLER MTV EDITION is the latest technology in portable videoke. VIDEO JUKEBOX CLASS!
Experience singing with various video background themes: OPM MTV, Korean videos, Nature and Anime. Plus! watch, listen & even sing with any of the 20 OPM MTVs.
Video na Yan!
20 OPM MUSIC VIDEOS
10 Reasons why you should choose Ziller MTV Edition
Now available at:
Kultura
odyssey MUSIC & VIDEO
Robinsons Appliances
Automatic
www.myziller.com

imageCLASS
Canon
Delighting You Always
THE PERFECT MATCH THIS YEAR OF THE OKs
Strike a good balance between efficiency and reliability and your business will be tranquil. Get Canon original toners bundled with high-performance Canon laser printers. At discounted prices. Find peace, and prosperity will follow.
Business Can be simple

Nani says GMA OKd his SALN

By Ellson C. Tandoc Jr.

FORMER JUSTICE SECRETARY Hermenegildo "Nani" Perez has again seized the Sandiganbayan to debunk the charges of unsolicited contributions in finding for not declaring the amount of $1.7 million in his 2004 statement of assets, liabilities and networth, saying President Macapagal-Arroyo herself did not involve him in what he filed.

In a supplemental motion for reconsideration he submitted to the Sandiganbayan Third Division, Perez said the "facts charged in the information (Dino) against him) do not constitute an offense."

Perez has been charged with unethical practices for his alleged failure to declare the $1.7 million in his 2004 SALN.

"The amount supposedly came from the $2 million Perez is charged with executing from former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez in 1998.

The Sandiganbayan has twice junked Perez's efforts to have the unethical practices case against him dismissed.

In his supplemental motion for reconsideration, Perez asked the court to "reconsider its resolution denying the motion to dismiss."

He said the arrests of his SALN, being a Cabinet secretary then, "is vested in the President of the Republic."

"Since the information does not contain the necessary element for the existence of acts of—prior determination by the President of the Republic that the statements of assets, liabilities and net worth filed by (Perez) were defective and his failure or refusal to correct the deficiency—it is quite obvious that the facts charged in the information are insufficient and do not constitute an offense," Perez argued.

He said he could only be prosecuted if the president had found a defect in his SALN and he refused to correct it, which was not the case.

President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office in January 2001.

He said that since "the information in fact not having fully alleged all the elements that would have been constituted an offense and there having been no completion of the process required by law for the establishment of an offense, it is exceedingly clear that (Perez) should be allowed a reconsideration so that the case against him should be dismissed."

Reviewing allegations that Perez had received money from Jimenez—which he later withdrew—for the filing of graft and robbery charges against Perez, his wife Rosario, in which he lost Ramon Ason and businessman Ernest Escalas.

The Ombudsman also filed another graft case as well as falsification charges against Perez.

The Sandiganbayan's First Division earlier dismissed the graft charges against him, while the Second Division junked the robbery charges.

Merged party now called Lakas-Kampi

By TJ Burgonio

MACTAN, CEBU—EVEN BEfore their merger is finalized, the two administration parties now have a winning name—Lakas-Kampi CMD.

The National Unification and Consolidation Committee (NUCC), tasked with finalizing the merger of the ruling Lakas-CMD and the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) opened the ice during talks, Cabinet Cesar Sarino and Ronaldo Zamora said yesterday.

"The party if the proposal of the committee is to be adopted, will be officially named Lakas-Kampi CMD," he said in a briefing at the Imperial Palace Waterpark Resort Hotel here.

Both parties, headed by President Macapagal-Arroyo, are targeting to merge by June to form a formidable lineup from the mayor up to the President in the May 2010 national elections.

Speaker Prospero Nograles and Rep. Luis Villafuerte had earlier quit as presidents of Lakas and Kampi, respectively, to pave the way for a smooth merger.

Apart from the name, the committee has also ratified and adopted the Constitution and bylaws for the proposed merged party, according to Claudio, chair of the committee.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Globe Telecom is pleased to announce the extension of the following promos from May 15 to July 18, 2009.

The mechanics are as follows:

Globe
Mint loving thumbs

Wild Filipino welcome for 2 American idols

By Marinel R. Cruz

ITOGON "PADDIGOSIUM"

This was how ala-opinator described the welcome downpour that Season 7 winner David Cook and runner-up David Archuleta received at the Sloan Aquino International Airport yesterday.

The two Davids are in Manila for a joint concert at the SM Mall of Asia (MOA) on May 16.

Cook arrived at 1:15 p.m. on a Singapore Airlines flight from Los Angeles. Archuleta came in two hours later via Qatar Airways from London, where he had a concert.

"Ahuge crowd came to greet them. They were supposed to have an interview with the airport press, but that was hard to pull off with all the people around," said Inday Jolyn Mancao of Positive Promotions, the concert promoter.

The singers have a tight schedule, performing the concert on radio and TV shows, Mancao said.

At 5 p.m. tomorrow, Archuleta will have a meet-and-greet with fans at SMMO Mills Mall, atrium. Cook will meet with regional bosses of his second label, Sony BMG.

On Thursday, Archuleta will perform on GMA 7's magazine show "Eat" at 11 a.m. He will then guest on the noontime game show "Eat... Bulaga!"

The two will rate radio station Magic 89.9 FM, a major concert sponsor, to be announces. Disc jockey Ric Taruc will interview Cook at 3 p.m. and Archuleta at 4 p.m.

At 7 p.m., a press conference for the two Davids will be held in the Makiss function room of the Edsa Shangri-La hotel in Mandaluyong City.

Cook will guest on "Eat... Bulaga!" on Saturday.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, May 13, 2009
6th Week of Easter
Our Lady of Fatima

1st Reading:	Acts 15:1-6
Gospel:	Jn 15:1-8

Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine and my Father is the vinegrower. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he lops off, and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, that it may bear even more fruit. You are already made clean by the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. The branch cannot bear fruit by itself but only if it remains part of the vine; so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. As long as you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit, but apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not remain in me is thrown away as they do with branches that wither. Then they are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned.

"If you remain in me and my words stay in you, you may ask whatever you want and it will be given to you. My Father is glorified when you bear much fruit. It is then that you become my disciples."

Commentary:

We need to remember that Jesus was talking to his disciples and, therefore, to us when he said, "I am the vine and you are the branches". The union of the branch and the shoot is exactly like the one of the vine. No one is greater, the one superior to the vine and supplier to life. We believe we are branches of the vine. The branches of the vine are many, and yet are all integral parts of the one vine. They all bear fruit because, although separated by distance and opinion, they are each other, together for Christ. We believe we, like the branches of the vine, need strong enough to stand on our own. In order to be fruitful, we must abide in Christ and must have a union with Him by faith in God (grace comes only if you feel we are deep connected). In connection with Him, let us wait to live more completely in Christ's fullness and to find Christ in every one of our good words and works, so that under His influence and His salvation may be full.

GMA: Climate change bad for economy

By TJ Burgonio

MACTAN, CEBU—CLIMATE CHANGE could destroy the country's economic gains unless the government, the private sector and non-government organizations intensify their mitigation and adaptation measures, President Macapagal-Arroyo warned yesterday.

Speaking at the One Visayas Summit on Climate Change here, Mrs Arroyo said the Philippines could suffer the brunt of a warming climate even if the country is only a small contributor of greenhouse gas emissions.

"If climate change were to reach its tipping point, Florida may lose some coastlines, but we may lose entire islands," the President said in her speech at the Imperial Palace Waterpark Resort Hotel here.

"We need not over-stress that climate change is bad for the economy, especially the Visayan economy, whose future is eco-tourism. So we don't have much time."

Fortunately, the President said, various solutions have been worked out internationally for the mitigation of climate change, the complex of efforts arising from the burning of forests and fossil fuels. She cited the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement to limit the emission of greenhouse gases, and the United Nations Convention on Climate Change.

On the domestic front, she said the government has been implementing adaptation measures like reforestation and early warning systems against natural disasters, and has passed laws such as the Solid Waste Management Act, the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act as mitigation measures, Ms Arroyo said.

But she stressed the importance for every barangay in the country to set up a material recovery facility (MRF) for the segregation of wastes to comply with the Solid Waste Management Act, and thereby reduce the country's carbon dioxide emissions.

Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, the head of the task force on solid waste management, has been going around the country with the President to impress upon barangay officials the importance of setting up an MRF.

"The Solid Waste Management Law mandates that every single barangay to have an MRF. That's not such a tall order," she said, pointing that an MRF could be as cheap as P200,000 or as costly as P2 million.

"This is something we want every barangay to do," she added.

Ms Arroyo said the country has also laid some cornerstone in "carbon trading," citing the reforestation of a northern part of Sierra Madre by Taiyen and the transformation of methane-driven power plants with the use of "carbon credits."

Climate change an imminent danger–Loren

CEBU CITY—THE CATASTROPHIC AND DEVastations caused by recent typhoons in Luzon showed that "climate change is an imminent and present danger," Sec. Loren Legarda said here on Monday.

"Climate change-induced disaster is not something that will happen in 50 years, but is a present and imminent danger now," Legarda said.

Speaking at the Climate Change Summit held at the Cebu International Convention Center in Mandaue City, Legarda pointed to the changes in climate trends.

"Ever recently, summer ended in almighty April had not yet even been over when typhoons came to inflict havoc on several parts of the country, drain lives and destroy properties," she told the summit participants.

Legarda cited three as manifestations of climate change. "Now the average 4-6 storms the country already have are nothing that when rated to be predictable weather patterns or cycles of crop cultivations and harvesting are changing very fast," she added.

Worst is yet to come

Legarda also warned that the worst is yet to come since the country would be exposed not only to typhoons and tropical cyclones but also to many other climate-related hazards, especially floods, landslides, and droughts.

"Still, more impacts and challenges can threaten be expected in the areas of agriculture and health," she added.

Legarda lauded the Visayas Regional Development organization for holding the summit as a way to enhance environmental consciousness and awareness.

She cited the need for local governments to come up with a strategy to counter climate change even as she recognized the proactive stance shown by the leaders from Bacolod, Cebu, and Western Visayas in combat climate change and to cooperate in reducing and preventing disaster risks arising from climate change.

"Although you are divided by waters within you, you are united by the cultural bond that you are all Visayans. I count that in times of distress, you can count on each other to give much-needed aid to the needy," she said during the welcome dinner tendered by Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia, Calbayog City Mayor Mel Senen Sarmiento and Antique Gov. Salvacion Perez.

6 more storms seen until July

By Nikko Dizon

SIX MORE STORMS ARE EXPECTED TO HIT the country from May until July, an official of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said yesterday, adding that the country has been experiencing "La Nina-like" weather conditions.

"We could have six more (weather disturbances) until July," Nathaniel Cruz, Pagasa assistant administrator, told the Inquirer by phone.

Cruz also said that there have been "more than average" weather disturbances this year because of the La Nina-like conditions, although there were less storms in May last year.

Since January, the country had five weather disturbances, with the last two—Bebeng and Emong—wreaking havoc in the Bicol region and Northern Luzon.

Cruz said that Pagasa may soon declare the termination of summer and officially announce the start of the rainy season.

He explained that Typhoon "Emong," which pummeled western towns of Pangasinan province, had "triggered and established" the entry of the southwest windflow.

"The prevailing windflow and the amount of rainfall are the two 'ingredients' that mark the entry of the rainy season, according to us.

The southwest monsoon brings in the rainy season.

What do these 6 persons have

that these 4 don't?

A Carrier.
Because 6 out of 10 trust a Carrier.

Carrier

No. 1 in air conditioning

24/7 Customer Hotline 863 5555

Fast anywhere, anytime FASTEST

Lasting After-Sales Support ABSOLUTELY AFTER-SALES SUPPORT

Parts Availability TOTALINE PARTS

120 Years of Cooling

Comelec: Automation only in urban areas

Front page A1

The Comelec's Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC) disqualified all seven firms that participated in the eligibility screening last week for various reasons. The procurement committee is currently hearing the appeals of the consortia.

"Unless it is for the completion with the law," the poll body would rather not enter into a negotiated bid with a consortium, Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez told the media yesterday.

He noted that a negotiated bidding would raise the poll body, which was reeling from attacks on its credibility when the Supreme Court voided the P1.2 billion contract the poll automation in the 2004 elections.

"We really don't want a negotiated contract. It will re-use the pains of automation," Jimenez said.

Under the law, the poll body must hold computerized polls in the 2010 national and presidential elections.

A pivotal automation demand on urban areas is the new law's scenario for the Comelec, Jimenez said.

Another possibility is to just hold manual elections, but the poll body is "not entertaining" that idea right now, he added.

Jimenez also rejected the suggestion of some quarters to use the Open Election System advocated by former Comelec Chair Christian Monsod and information technology expert Augusto Lagman. This involves manual counting of ballots, but computerized counting and transmission of results.

According to Jimenez, the system was not included in the proposal for the Personal Guard Optical Scan (PGOS) system preferred by Comelec.

The PGOS is a paper-based automated election system where the ballot is scanned, recorded and transmitted from the precinct level. The Comelec said it needed 80,000 election machines for 2010.

Jimenez said the SBAC, chaired by legal department chief Ferdinand Rafinan, was expected to act on the bidders' appeal for reconsideration either today or tomorrow.

Despite the disqualifications, Jimenez said the poll body was still within its timeline in its election preparations.

Muckraging among bidders

With the results yet unannounced, bidders engaged in muckraging among themselves, something still not to be expected. But, this time around, the attacks were swift and were seen on cyberspace.

Two days after the disqualifications, a video was uploaded on YouTube showing an official of one of the bidders signing documents inside a bathroom in the Comelec, ostensibly to comply with a requirement just before that the competition has become stiffer and tougher is a testament to the transparency in the bidding process, observers said.

In the bidding for the 2004 automation project, the duo about MegaPacific Solutions Corp. came from Smartmatic Corp., which was run by a local Philippine Company Security official Lilia de Mesquita.

This time, however the companies and their subsidiaries were wounded during the eligibility screening, it was easy for companies to find fault with each other, Jimenez said.

"In 2004, the process was not so open," he said.

Tony Leyva of the Transparency and Accountability Network said the issues and the attacks against the companies still ultimately help the SBAC in its post-disqualification process.

"They will have an idea what to investigate," she said.

Student. At work.

Yes, at Informatics you can work right away even after a year.

Informatics' unique ladderized program allows students to acquire specialized skills in IT as early as their first year of study. A certificate of completion is awarded after every year, qualifying them to work immediately.

But of course, students still have the option to continue studying and finish their degree in Informatics' 37 local institutes and colleges, or in 150 Informatics International centers in 22 countries, or even in its affiliated universities in the US or UK.

Either way, it's an open road to being independent earlier.

Enroll now in any of the following:

3 year Bachelor Degree Courses:
BS in Computer Science, BS in IT, BS in Information Systems, BS in Business Administration, BS in Computer Engineering

2 year Advanced Diploma Courses:
Computing, Information Technology, Business IT, Networks and Cyberspace, Gaming and Animation Technology

1 year Diploma Courses:
Computer Technician, Computer Programming, Office Management, Customer Relations, Computerized Bookkeeping

informatics

E-mail: inquiry@informatics.edu.ph / Text Hotline: 0917-8232222 www.informatics.edu.ph

WHO exec's 10 other child victims sought

Front page A1

"Medge, who has been working in Manila for seven years, videotaped his alleged sexual acts with the minors for his personal consumption," said Third Insp. Gener Lamawing, team leader of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Criminal Investigation and Detection Group's Women and Children Protection Division (CIDG-WCPD) based on information received by her unit.

However, police have yet to find the tapes to prove this.

Authorities said they believed children from poor neighborhoods in Pasay City had been "playing" with Medge and his dirty game for years.

"Maybe for [the young victims] ... what happened [to Medge's car] was like a buddy, child's play," Lamawing said. "They do not understand that what we want is them to testify against the law."

Pimp's list

Lamawing's team is coordinating with the social welfare department to track down the 10 other children on the list of Medge's alleged pimp, 21-year-old Filipino Wilson Cutling, said to be the caretaker's "source victims."

Medge, WHO program development and operations officer, and Cutling have been in CIDG custody since their arrest. They face in the custody of social workers.

Police are looking for the other victims, minors ages range from 10 to 15 years old, the eight-the pimp's list that contained only names, most of them celebrity names.

Lamawing said her team would watch three teenagers in Pasay, adults are adjacent to the known pickup point.

"Based on the statement of our informant, these are several other children that Mr. Medge used. They belong to the same clique who lure villages for beauty pageants ... It would be good if we can find the other children," she said.

Doing the 'scare'

Citing the victim's statement to the police, Lamawing said the 12-year-old boy was "scared to watch" Medge and another minor do the act—"scare" in pampanga—inside his silver Mazda 3 car.

This occurred in late April as the team probing he of the Makati condominium where Medge and Cutling were caught.

"In that time (April), there were four of them in the car. While Medge and another boy were doing it...the [12-year-old] victim was in the car with the pimp ... the one made to watch what they were doing," Lamawing said.

Mobile phones

Last week, it was allegedly the 12-year-old's turn to do the "scare." Then the police arrest, which find Medge under surveillance for more days, broke it up.

For the victim's protection, Cutling would usually pick up the boys at an agreed location in Pasay. They would take a bus to Edsa and get off at Ermita street in Manila.

Lamawing said everything was arranged by mobile phone.

From his Bodowell Center residence, Medge would allegedly pick up Cutling and the boys and drive them to the parking basement of his condo.

Inside Medge's heavily tinted Mazda, the "scare" was done in 10 to 15 minutes.

Like play

"The [building security] had no idea [what was happening] because [Medge] was very careful. His car was heavily tinted. The only time he rolled down his window was to swipe his parking card or he removed [the parking stub]," Lamawing said.

Once Medge had gotten his rightly fix, he would send the boys home. Cutling said the boys would take a ride home, and the others. Each boy would go home with P500, Cutling told PNP.

Asked about the 12-year-old victim's condition, Lamawing said: "He seems OK. He trusted the whole thing as play. They earned money ... He feared no limitation (in narrating what happened)."

Asked if the boys' parents know about their sons' "activities," Lamawing said: "It's possible they know, because the children earned money from it ... If they did know, they may be liable for human trafficking. But that's hard to establish because somebody else pimps the boys."

Quiet Australian

Medge has been keeping quiet.

"He doesn't say anything unless we tease him why he likes little boys. But to me, dinner memories," Lamawing said.

He said Australian federal police paid a visit to the CIDG-WCPD on Monday and circulated support in the investigation.

"They are coordinating it ... They are very supportive of our campaign against sex tourism and child exploitation," Lamawing added.

Yes, Inc.'s with WHO

The WHO Western Pacific office in Manila finally confirmed that the authorities were co-operative.

The WHO office said in a statement that the matter "involves the private life" of its staff, but that it would cooperate with the police.

It also said the Australian "should be presumed innocent unless proven guilty."

But it added: "Without prejudging the case, the WHO would like to put on record that it condemns in the strongest terms the sexual exploitation of children and will assist the authorities with their investigations."

The police have asked state prosecutors to file criminal charges against the two suspects. Sexual exploitation of a minor below 18 years old is punishable by life imprisonment and a fine of up to P5 million under a law passed in 2003. With reports from AFP and AP

Naga girl is last remaining swine flu suspect

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE NUMBER OF PERSONS INFECTED with the A(H1N1) flu virus has shot up to 38 from 22 as of Monday after the Department of Health (DOH) received reports of suspected cases from private hospitals.

The DOH, however, stressed that only one patient—a 4-year-old girl from Naga City—is still under observation, pending the results of her laboratory tests.

Thirty-seven of the so-called cases under observation since May 1 have already tested negative for the deadly swine flu virus, and so far 35 of them have been discharged from the hospital. The remaining two still have to be discharged.

According to the DOH, the Naga City girl arrived on May 9 from the United States, which has the highest number of confirmed swine flu cases.

Health Undersecretary Ethelin Villaverde said the girl was brought to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) in Alabang, Muntinlupa, on May 11 for treatment amid reports that she was running a fever.

But Villaverde said the jump in the number of suspected cases was not a cause for alarm.

He said the government merely updated its record of cases after private hospitals reported the suspected swine flu cases they had received since May 1.

Villaverde, however, said the country remains free of the virus, which has already spread to 23 countries.

The Philippines has received about 300 testing kits from the World Health Organization. With these testing kits, the country's pathology laboratories can readily check if a specimen taken from a patient with flu would test positive for the A(H1N1) virus.

In Naga City, health authorities have stepped up the monitoring of possible A(H1N1) cases after the girl who came from San Diego, California, showed flu-like symptoms upon her arrival in the Philippines.

Dr. Vito Borja, city health officer, said the patient was handled by two physicians who volunteered to quarantine themselves in their homes as a precautionary measure.

Borja declined to reveal the place in Naga where the patient stayed upon arrival to prevent panic among the public.

He said the patient would be further tested at the RITM in Alabang. Her parents were also quarantined with her in the hospital. They were all supposed to attend a wedding in Naga.

The regional health office has already started contact-tracing and surveillance on persons who were in contact with the girl, Borja said.

But he warned people to avoid unnecessary, especially since the maximum Tamiflu could be bought over the counter is five pieces.

A patient who takes Tamiflu even without the A(H1N1) virus may develop resistance to the medicine, Borja said.

Dr. Soxsie Santiago, regional health director, said the DOH, in cooperation with the city government, had already laid down plans for public health interventions to monitor the community where the patient had stayed upon her arrival.

"I also called on the immediate family members, the relatives and the hospital personnel who had contact with the child to self-quarantine to prevent the possible spread of the disease," he added.

Santiago said that the provincial government had already allocated half a million pesos as a standby fund for contingency measures.

Albay Gov. Joey Salceda has already closed hospitals to set aside quarantine rooms in case a confirmed case of A(H1N1) emerges in the province.

These are Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital in Legazpi City, Ziga Memorial District Hospital in Tabaco City and Josefina Cseras Memorial District Hospital in Tiwi, Albay City. With reports from Juan Escandor Jr., Jonas Cabiles Subia and Boy Nessel, Inquirer Southern Luzon

'GMA can run for prime minister'

From page A1

the Senate voting jointly.

With the House dominating in numbers, the Senate would then become irrelevant, according to lawmakers. The Senate is opposing Con-ass.

Ortega, who chairs the committee, said nobody would be prohibited from running for prime minister should Congress pass the controversial constitutional amendments and the shift in the parliamentary system was approved in a plebiscite.

"All prohibitions contained in the (current) Constitution is set aside," he said.

"Should we become parliamentary, President Gloria can run in her district, President Erap can run in San Juan, President Cory in Tarlac and Presidente Ramos in Pangasinan. If they will become prime ministers, only God can answer that," Ortega said.

He stressed that he was only talking about the possibility and not the probability of Ms. Arroyo running for Congress.

"It only confirmed our fears that those (Con-Ass) resolutions are dangerous and are aimed to extend Arroyo's stay in office," said Akbayan Rep. Rafe Rimbawan Baraquel.

Immunity from lawsuits

Former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. claimed that the President would run for a congressional seat in her Lahar hometown in Pampanga in 2010 to have immunity from lawsuits.

Nueva Ecija Rep. Rodolfo Antonino said that it was entirely possible that she will become Speaker.

But Quezon Rep. Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III pointed out that only the prime minister (not like the president in the current system) would have legal immunity.

Tañada said this was the reason President Arroyo, who has faced a string of corruption scandals, has in he impeached first before being dumped in court, while senators or congressmen could be charged in court anytime.

Public hearings required

Antonino earlier said that approval of HB 1108 in the committee should come first since it had already been endorsed by a clear majority of the House members with 274 signatures.

Antonino said it would be a waste of time for the committee to discuss it further when the proposed treaty had sufficient support.

But Representative Baron Geronpot of Bayan Muna and Rufus Rodriguez of Cagayan de Oro City argued that HB 1109 should go through public hearings just like all bills before being voted to the floor for plenary voting.

Ortega noted that the antinarcosis bill he authored had been endorsed by a majority of House members, just like HB 1108, but it also went through the mandatory hearings.

Decision to come 'very soon'

Ortega answered with Gonzales and Rodriguez's views that Arroyo's proposed to push HB 1300 would set a bad precedent for all pending bills and would negate the purpose of committee hearings that were required to get the pulse of the people.

As a compromise, Ortega said he would ask House Majority Leader Arthur Defensor to put on hold debates on HB 737, which has been on the House agenda over the last three weeks, until the committee has been able to hear resource persons in its Tuesday hearing.

Ortega said it was necessary that the plenary should decide on HB 737 and HB 1300 simultaneously to decide what mode of Cha-cha they wanted.

He said that the lawmakers would have to decide on Magdalo' leader's motion of Militante's Con-ass, meant to force detractors to go to the Supreme Court to rule on whether voting should be jointly or separately.

"There are only three ways of amending the Constitution—the people's initiative, constitutional convention (Con-con) and Con-ass.

"Your way or the other, we will make a decision on the mode very soon," Ortega said.

Con-con proponents minority

In a press conference, Negrado said that voting on HR 737 and HR 1109 would finally settle the mode in changing the Constitution. He said that the mode should be addressed first before his proposed amendments could be tackled.

Based on pertinent survey discussions, Negrado said that HR 1109 would make a general provision (through the phrase "as provided by law") allowing Congress to amend specific investment areas covered by the 60-percent limit on foreign equity.

But the minority is still not giving up on Con-ven. Tañada said it was high time the House consider the more "viable" option of Con-con as the preferred Cha-cha mode.

Ortega, a delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention, and Baguio City Rep. Mauricio Domogan conversed with Tañada about the possibility of adopting a Con-con with the delegates to be voted as soon as 2010.

Change? Group lists a hundred simple ways

From page A1

the bucket of the group behind Gov. Yuna. "If we still do these small actions together, the impact will be big."

Like the ways it recommends, the website has simple rules: If you join as a member, commit yourself to do the simple acts and share them with your friends. If you have other ideas on what you think will do the country good, contribute them to the site.

Chance to do right

One Tuna has listed 112 simple acts since it started two months ago; it members members who are doing have done, or have shared with others each of the acts.

"The website gives people the opportunity to do right at their own pace," said Dy, who works as team trainings of Management.

The simple acts listed in the site cover such themes as protecting the environment, promoting good governance, and encouraging volunteerism, among others.

One Tuna involves members of positive behaviors that are often taken for granted, like not spitting on the street, not engaging in text messaging while driving, and not pushing or shoving while on the train.

It recommends good habits like flushing the toilet after use, disembarking from vehicles only at the designated areas—and not complaining to others.

"We want people to realize that while their own interest, be it at work or at home, there is something right that they can do," Dy said.

Beginnings

One Tuna is a project of Dayan ng Gitna (Cradle of Virtue), which is composed of about 18 members, mostly graduates of Ateneo de Manila University.

The group served as a venue "for us to help one another to resolve our idealism," said Dy, the erstwhile head of his batch at Ateneo.

The Dayan ng Gitna began as a weekly gathering of friends a few months after they graduated from college in 2006.

By then, the members had started working in different companies, and the gatherings provided a way for them to "share our stories and our frustrations about the country," Dy said.

According to group member Johann Vicente Tiruñal, he and his colleagues were mostly student leaders doing volunteer work in college.

Their common motivation was a "desire for change," Tiruñal said. "We wanted to do something, but what it was, we did not know yet."

Listening to a song over his car radio one day, Dy came across a memorable line: "We can be heroes for just one day."

He thought that more everyone wanted a better country, "why don't we try to be heroes for a day?"

Thus, One Tuna was born.

Young professionals

The Dayan ng Gitna met with the Ideals Creatives, a social enterprise group involved in multimedia projects and composed of students of the University of the Philippines.

"They had an idea of launching a campaign to promote nationalism. He decided to develop a twist to it, and we came up with One Tuna," recalled Ideals Creatives officer Mariolle Recial.

With young professionals as targets, the project was turned into a website. It was launched on July 25.

"The challenge of doing right is our most current in very appropriate among young professionals," Dy said.

To ease the website, Dayan ng Gitna members listed 10 simple acts to achieve change. As more and more people learned about the campaign, One Tuna users suggested other simple acts to keep the list growing.

Soon, group members' inboxes were sending e-mails to the group to express support. "We realized that there is an age limit to doing what is right," Dy said.

To popularize the campaign, Dy's group has pressured One Tuna at the Dalaguete at Balitaoka and the Why Not? Lounge.

One Tuna's vision is to make the simple acts a habit among Filipinos.

"We no longer need to wait for good things to happen in our country," it said. "We can begin today by inspiring one another for positive action."

ZEKOKI
Do it yourself, the Professional way
with
ZEKOKI LAWN & GARDEN TOOLS

Harbor's
Lights & More

They all want alliance with Pacquiao party if ...

By Jocelyn R. Uy

IF MANNY PACQUIAO DOES plunge into politics, there's a fairly good chance that the contenders will hitch their wagons to his star.

At least five aspirants for the presidency in 2010 have said they would form an alliance with Pacquiao if his political party, the People's Champ Movement, runs on a platform of good governance and honors opportunities for unity among Filipinos.

In a leadership forum held on Monday night in Ateneo de Manila University, Senators Francisco Escudero, Richard Gordon and Mar Roxas, Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro said that the boxing champion's drawing power could do good for the country if utilized wisely.

The five aspirants were asked if they were willing to form a coalition with Pacquiao's party.

'Why not?'

Said Gordon, who was asked to answer first: "Why not? Politics should not have anyone behind ... I can sure Manny will have a lot of say in things that concern poor Filipinos making their way up."

Gordon also said that if he were to link up with Pacquiao in 2010, he would make the boxing champion a vote monitor for each ethnic.

The senator pointed out that Pacquiao, with his clean demeanor and hard work, would be a good mayor somewhere.

Panlilio said that should he decide to run for presidency, he might coalesce with Pacquiao if the latter's party runs on a platform of good governance and reforms.

But it is necessary that a coalition is worthy of the People's Champ Movement and the people behind it, he cautioned, said Panlilio, who in 2007 unsuccessfully left the presidential and sought the top post in Pampanga on a platform of good governance and genuine change.

"I believe that [act] should cut across political boundaries ... If Manny's platform holds rules for genuine service and the development of the country, why not?" Panlilio said, adding:

"But if not, I am sorry. I can not be with him."

Drawing power

Teodoro took note of Pacquiao's drawing power among the Filipino youth, and said this could be employed in conveying government policies to the public.

The defense secretary observed that even big corporations wanted the boxing champion, or invested by the extent of endorsement offered him.

"I will welcome him if he will voice out a message that will be good for our youth," Teodoro said.

Roxas, the president of the Liberal Party, said he would unite with Pacquiao in 2010 if the latter's platform of government matches his.

Escudero said he was likewise open to the idea provided that Pacquiao and his party espouse more measures to unite the country riddled with corruption and poverty.

"We just should not being along with him the use he wanted to Malacañang a while ago," Escudero said, referring to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Early on Monday, Mr Arroyo honored Pacquiao with a reception in Malacañang, a declaration naming him an ambassador-at-large, and a luncheon that included a cake especially designed by Dulcinea chefs.

Knockout warning

Pacquiao is rumored to be preparing to run for the lone congressional seat in Sarangani province next year.

Just last week, Malacañang discouraged Pacquiao from returning to the political arena, warning him of a possible knockout.

On his first try for a congressional seat in 2007, the boxing champion was roundly defeated by Senator Constantino Rap. Dan Jose Antonino Gutcello.

MEET FIVE The leadership forum at Ateneo de Manila University on Monday presented five presidential hopefuls from left, Sen. Francis Escudero, Pampanga Gov. Ed Panlilio, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, Sen. Mar Roxas and Sen. Richard Gordon. MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

5 aspirants will probe Arroyos for corruption

Front page 1 |

Gilbert Teodoro and Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio, locked, none of them energized enough to run for the presidency.

His offense—that President Noli de Castro, Senators Manuel Villar, Panfilo Lacson and Loren Legarda, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando—declined the invitation to attend, perhaps fearing that early exposure to the hot medium due to TV might melt their electoral chances. They may have lost in the first round of public exposure by default.)

Key issue

The prospect of an investigation of the corruption scandals in the Arroyo administration has developed into a key issue defining the electoral chances and stances of the presidential aspirants.

The defining question was sprung in the second part of the forum: If you become president, will you support investigations of the various allegations concerning the Arroyo family?

Pilfered Institution, Roxas said, "Yes!" He said it would be "hard for the country to prosper" if it did not come to terms with and get to the bottom of the corruption scandals that had eroded the Arroyo administration.

"We need to investigate" in order to learn from those equally experiences to governance, he said.

Former Senator moved him with a more decisive tongue—a departure from his usually bland and oblique style of behavior.

Of the five, it is Roxas who needs to convince himself and to acquire charisma, should he be elected first to be.

The forum sponsored by ABS-CBN News Channel (ANC) and Ateneo School of Management apparently have benefitted him in generating his image.

Evidence needed

Teodoro, widely believed to being groomed as the administration candidate's candidate, tried to take an independent posture, apparently to win public credibility.

"Nobody can stop a legal process of investigation backed by evidence," he said. But without evidence, he said, such an inquiry would amount to "political harassment."

Teodoro said that unless he was called to the House of Representatives to the congressman from Tarlac, for reason to choose one an impeachment complaint against Mr Arroyo because it lacked sufficient evidence.

Escudero tried to stamp his mark as an opportunist on the issue and said his reason "should be held responsible for lost an Oust."

He said that as the minority leader in the House, he twice led impeachment moves against Mr Arroyo.

"My position then was that the people must know the truth and that the wheels of justice should spare no one, not even the President," he said.

'Equal to all'

Gordon, chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee, also sought to distance himself from Mr Arroyo and to take an independent stance.

"I'm a lawyer, a man of law," he said. "We have to follow [due process] of law. We have to prove the allegations of corruption with evidence. Otherwise, the process becomes hearsay. We need to believe in the law that's equal to all."

Gordon complained that the Ombudsman was sleeping on corruption cases. He demanded to know: Here are the cases, move when the President appointed an Ombudsman who is the commander of his husband?

Panlilio, the first Roman Catholic priest in the Philippines to be elected governor, said: "We should be a society of laws. Nobody should be above the law. Let the process of law and justice take its course."

In the same issue, Panlilio said, the investigation should not be limited to the present but should be extended to other cases of corruption in the public sector.

Common ground

Among the questions posed to the presidential aspirants in the forum, it was that of corruption that gave them a common ground against the administration.

The should serve as a message to the President that she cannot be accused of immunity from investigation after she serves out her term, said that she cannot count on significant allies of the measure to shield her and her family from such inquiries.

In a poll conducted by ABC among the Ateneo participants, the issue of corruption was among the top 10 concerns, along with poverty and law and order.

There was another question on which the five aspirants had a consensus: Would you form a coalition with the party of boxing champion Manny Pacquiao? (See story on this page.)

The question shifted the discourse from the sublime to the ridiculous. But it revealed the opportunistic mentality of the aspirants, who all appeared ready to use Pacquiao's fame to enhance their political fortunes.

DELTA nwa

NORTHWEST IS NOW A PART OF DELTA AIR LINES

SPECIALS TO THE U.S. FROM 595

Explore all that the U.S. has to offer with these special fares from Northwest Airlines, including additional stopovers on your roundtrip travel from Tokyo to New York and Salt Lake City. Simply purchase your tickets before June 15, 2009 and depart flights between now and August 31, 2009.

Book now at nwa.com/ph or your travel agent. You can also call Delta Air Lines® and Northwest Reservations at 631-4800 or your travel agent.

ROUNDTRIP ECONOMY CLASS FARE FROM MANILA TO:

Los Angeles, San Francisco, Las Vegas ... $595

Seattle, Portland (PDX) ... $620

New York (JFK/LGA/EWR), Chicago (ORD/MDW) ... $800

Washington, D.C. (DCA/IAD), Atlanta, Baltimore, Dallas (Fort Worth), Houston, San Antonio (TX) ... $890

Terms and conditions: • Fares are in U.S. Dollars and do not include fuel surcharges (USD570 per return passenger as of May 1, 2009), taxes and fees and are subject to change without prior notice. • The offer is valid for round-trip travel originating from Manila to only 3 cities in the U.S. • Fare applies to travel in Economy Class (L, U, T, V, X, E, S, Y, B, M, H, Q, K, G, N, O, R, W, I, Z) only. • Travel must be completed on or before June 15, 2009 and depart Manila between August 1, 2009 and August 31, 2009. • Fare is non-refundable. Changes to travel dates are permitted subject to payment of a $150 change fee per ticket plus any fare difference. • Fare is available to passengers with a registered credit card holding address in the Philippines. • Fare must be booked and paid for in full at the time of reservation. • Fare is valid for travel on Delta Air Lines, Northwest Airlines and Delta Connection carriers. • Fare is non-transferable. • Fare is not valid for group travel. • Stopover permitted on one side. • Open jaw permitted on one side. • Travel agency commission not valid. • Fares are not permitted. • Flight, fare change and/or level of service subject to DOT/CAB approval. For more details of the Contract of Carriage, please contact Delta Air Lines, Northwest Airlines or Delta Connection carriers. • Fare is subject to availability at time of booking. • Fare is valid for travel from June 15, 2009 – August 31, 2009. • Partially and unflown coupons are non-refundable. • Travel must commence on the date specified on the ticket. • Fare is valid for travel with Delta Air Lines, Northwest Airlines and Delta Connection carriers. • Fare is subject to availability at time of booking. • Minimum stay and maximum stay may apply. • Fare is subject to change without prior notice. • Fare is subject to availability of seats in the applicable booking class. • Fare is non-refundable. • Fare is non-transferable. • Fare is not valid for travel on Delta Air Lines, Northwest Airlines and Delta Connection carriers. • Fare is subject to availability of seats in the applicable booking class

Pacquiao's peace job: Grace AFP vs MILF cage tilts

By Jaime Laya
Arroyo administration.

To begin with, he would place a basketball tournament pitting government troops against members of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) or rightist rebels, said Press Secretary Cerge Remonde.

"Then will be events and activities that will be organized that will ensure inclusion as a team person," Remonde said in a media briefing here. "He will be useful as a symbol, as a rallying point for events, which in the process, would involve national unity."

Special treat side also

Remonde said Pacquiao would focus on his new job within the next three to four months when he's not yet training for his next bout. During the period, the boxer would go around the country giving activities promoting national solidarity.

Besides the title of peace envoy, Pacquiao was named "special assistant on intelligence matters" of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez on Monday.

Gonzalez said the post would be "honorary," meaning the boxer would receive no salary.

Remonde said the idea of a basketball tournament was hatched on Friday when President Macapagal-Arroyo was originally set to meet with Pacquiao.

Ms. Arroyo missed the meeting and the "national day of celebration" to Monday—in the recommendation of the World Undefeated Champion.

Pacquiao and his team had been advised to go on a five-day self-quarantine since they had stayed in Los Angeles where a case of human-to-human transmission of the deadly A(H1N1) flu virus had been recorded.

Riding on the Champ

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile said Pacquiao could easily do the job for Gonzalez. "With all the people admiring him, he can get information."

Sen. Panfilo Lacson was noncommittal, saying he did not know Pacquiao well enough.

"All I know is that he is good in sports, he's the best in the world. If he's appointed as undersecretary for sports, he can do a good job," Lacson said in Filipino.

But the opposition senator observed that the positions given Pacquiao by the Palace were apparently done because "everybody wants to jump on the bandwagon."

"He's very popular and people idolize him, and that's why it's understandable that there are those who want to ride on and take advantage of the situation," Lacson said.

Time for politics

Sen. Mar Roxas said he believed Pacquiao would be able to help the government and the country as envoy for peace, especially in Mindanao.

"Many people will listen to him," Roxas told reporters.

But he said people would have to resolve themselves how Pacquiao would be able to contribute as an intelligence affairs.

His school Lacson's views that Pacquiao was given such positions because it was "a time for politics now."

"Those seeking to run for office are looking for ways to be close to Pacquiao as their endorsers," Roxas said.

Symbol of unity

The senator said Pacquiao should present his clean and unencumbered name. "If he allows himself to be used, he will be ridiculed by the corrupt who are coming to him to use him."

Pacquiao has announced that he would again run for Congress in next year's elections, made in the district of his hometown in General Santos City.

Pacquiao, he has agreed to be this symbol of unity and of course, we are very grateful for that," Remonde said. "But of course, when it comes to his decision to go into politics, that is his own decision. He should at respect him." With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

A(H1N1) hits Thailand, 2 others

By Jaime Laya

"It would have been difficult for us to have controlled this epidemic," Cordora said in a statement, adding that Mexico had 46 deaths and 2,899 confirmed cases of swine flu.

Cantos, the former Cuban president, accused Mexico of failing to disclose the spread of swine flu until after Obama had visited en route to the hometown of the Americas to friendly host nation.

"Mexican authorities did not inform the world of the presence (of the swine flu virus), while they waited for Obama's visit," Cantos wrote on a government website hours after Cuba confirmed its first swine flu case.

Obama's April 16 visit came a week before Mexican health officials announced the A(H1N1) influenza virus was spreading, prompting an eventual mass shutdown that brought many parts of the country to a virtual halt.

At least 61 people have been killed by swine flu around the world, and the World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed over 1,270 cases.

Cuban patient

Cuba said its first swine flu case was a Mexican student attending a Cuban medical school. China earlier reported its first case on the mainland involving a Chinese student who had just returned from the United States.

Cuba's health ministry said a group of medical students from Mexico began arriving on the island to resume their studies on April 23—four days before Cuban authorities halted airline flights from Mexico. Fourteen of the students suffered from flu-like symptoms.

In Finland, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health said that two young adults from the Helsinki region who recently arrived from Mexico had the H1N1 infection. The two patients are being treated at home.

First in Southeast Asia

In Thailand, the health minister announced the country's first confirmed cases of swine flu in two people who also recently returned from Mexico. The two cases in Thailand marked the official arrival of swine flu in Southeast Asia.

"The two patients have received a full dose of antiviral medicine and have returned to live normal lives," Health Minister Witthaya Kaewparadai said, stressing "there is no outbreak in Thailand."

Witthaya said that one of the patients had a fever upon returning from Mexico and the other one developed a temperature three days after getting back to Thailand.

Authorities have monitored eight people close to both patients for a week and none registered any symptoms.

Witthaya said that an additional 14 people in Thailand were being monitored for swine flu.

23,000 cases in Mexico

A study published on Monday in the journal Science estimates Mexico alone may have had 23,000 cases of swine flu by April 23, the day the Mexican government announced the epidemic.

The study estimates swine flu kills between 0.4 percent and 1.4 percent of its victims, but lead author Neil Ferguson of Imperial College, London, says the data are still incomplete.

The analysis in Science suggests there are many more cases than those confirmed by laboratories—anywhere from 8,000 to 32,000 cases in Mexico as of April 23.

Researchers have also compared the DNA of the viruses in 23 confirmed cases, and they came up with an estimate of Jan. 12 for their earliest common ancestor—presumably where person-to-person transmission began. But they said it could have been anywhere from Nov. 3 to March 2.

The researchers said the 2009 H1N1 flu appears to be about equal in severity to the flu of 1957 and less severe than the deadly 1918 version.

According to the analysts in Science, the A(H1N1) virus appears to be substantially more contagious than normal, seasonal flu.

Return to normalcy

In Mexico, Monday's reopening of kindergartens and primary and middle schools shut down April 24 was the latest step in efforts to restore a sense of normalcy. Businesses, government services, high schools and universities reopened last week.

But six of Mexico's 31 states put off reopening schools for a week because of local rises in the numbers of the cases, and a nationwide pushed it back a day to Tuesday.

The education department said it would use an extra seven days onto the school calendar to make up for the lost time.

But while officials praised the health and education systems for their response to the crisis, there were signs that Mexico's overburdened health system was under strain.

Demand for higher pay

Dozens of government health care workers, including doctors and nurses, marched and blocked streets in the Gulf coast city of Jalapa to demand higher pay and better working conditions.

"The government asked our help in combating the influenza epidemic, now we are asking the government to do us justice," said nurse Mariana Cortes, one of the protest organizers.

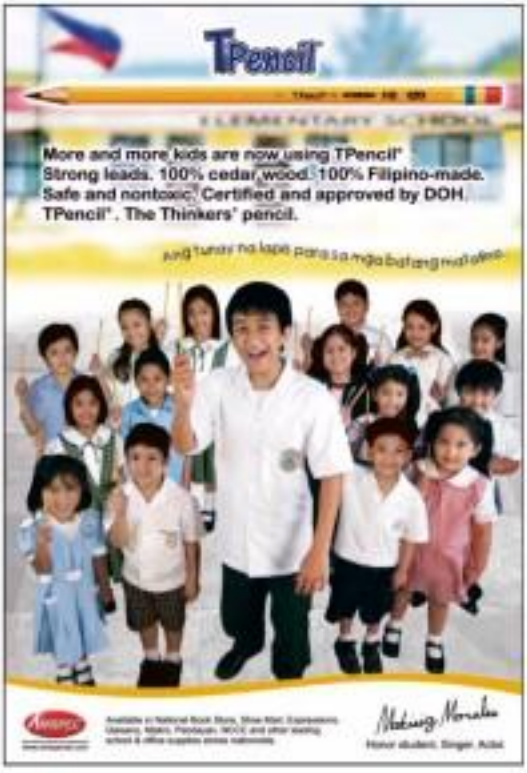
Mexico is trying to revive its economy after the epidemic paralyzed tourism, the country's third-largest source of legal foreign income. Mexico provided details on Monday of a $1.1-billion package to help restaurants, hotels and other businesses.

At least 10 commercial banks are involved in the plan, promising three-month reprieves for small businesses with outstanding loans in Mexico City and two hard-hit states. Small businesses in beach resorts and other tourist destinations were promised extra month grace period.

Publicity campaign

Later in the day, Tourism Secretary Rodolfo Elizondo said the government would launch a $90-million publicity campaign this week, urging Mexicans to vacation at home.

Noting that several nations have issued travel warnings or restricted airline flights to Mexico, Elizondo said trying to promote trips to Mexico by foreigners now "would be like throwing money away." AP



ISSN 0116-2042 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER VOL. XXXVI, NO. 234

OPINION

Larger than Villar

EDITORIAL

THAT IS WHAT PUBLIC OFFICE IS: A PUBLIC trust. And the question every official must confront, sooner or later, is how is that trust to be retained? It cannot be on the basis of what Ferdinand Marcos, himself a master of the genre, dismissed as "technical legalities" in his private diaries. That is, by insisting on the letter of the law to cannot how such an insistence contradicts the spirit of the law.

The public is mightily sick of official arguments that their actions enjoy a "presumption of regularity," or that all demands for accountability are mere "political noise" and can only be settled before the "proper forum," meaning courts that are susceptible to governmental foot-dragging or influence-peddling.

The continuing efforts of Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. (and his political allies, since he's been overseas) to tar and feather efforts to hold him accountable are a continuing disgrace, because having criticized President Macapagal-Arroyo for evading efforts to make her answer to allegations of wrongdoing, Villar and his allies should be the first to volunteer to face any and all allegations of wrongdoing, too.

To a highly limited extent, Villar did this by making a privilege speech in the Senate, and maneuvering the creation of hearings on allegations of his engaging in self-serving budgetary insertions in the Senate as a committee of the whole, instead of letting things unfold in the ethics committee. However, efforts to continue the hearings have been hampered by the consistent refusal of Villar's allies to cooperate.

Let us set aside the irony of any politician denouncing efforts to investigate them as politically motivated persecutions—that is par for the course, part of the rhetorical camouflage of the profession. Let us focus, instead, on Villar doing himself more harm than good, politically speaking, by loving the issue fester, and compounding the problem by duplicating Malacañang's tactics. And let us bear in mind that the issue is larger than Villar, and it is one that the entire legislature has to confront.

The issue is the prevalence of high-ranking or well-placed legislators intervening in the budgetary process, for the purpose of pork-barrel politics. It just so happens that Villar's practices in this regard have been seized upon by his enemies, but self-serving motivations aside, his critics couldn't keep up the heat if there weren't a genuine issue at hand. If it was all a non-issue, surely Villar would have adequately laid all the accusations to rest.

Instead, what he did in his privilege speech was to imply that he had the goods on his enemies, and that if they didn't "back off" (to adopt a term beloved by the President's henchmen), he just might spill the beans. A classic political bluff.

But of course if Villar were to expose his colleagues for similar practices, he risks winning a Pyrrhic victory, one in which all of the political class would be exposed to public condemnation, which could possibly have negative consequences politically—for himself, his allies, and everyone else, at a time when the stakes of the game, with 2010 in mind, is true politics is addictive.

Maybe the bluff worked, to the extent that it inspired even the most zealous of Villar's detractors to consent to convening the Senate as a committee of the whole. And yet things have advanced too far for the whole issue to be dropped. While Villar may or may not end up giving a satisfactory—and exculpatory—explanation of how he handled the budget process, the Senate will still be duty-bound to reach some sort of policy decision concerning how it handles budget-making.

Will it continue holding closed-door bicameral conference committee hearings, in which the senior members of both houses engage in writing a third budget, one markedly different from the versions passed by either chamber? And one in which all political affiliations dissolve in the face of the hundreds of millions of reasons these legislative elders find it making common cause with whatever happens to be the chief executive?

Or will it finally seek to close off the institutional circumstances to an open, and accountable, budgetary process, by taking attendance and releasing minutes that detail each and every compromise reached in the conference committee?

Villar, in a sense, is the key to unlocking—and revealing—past practices, and how they can be improved for the public good.

Publisher Isaac Tourist
Editor in Chief Letty Jacinto-Magkasakit
Managing Editor Jose Ma. D. Hilvano
Associate Editor Alejandro S. Usanos
Assistant Editor for Features Rosario C. Garcellano
Opinion Editor Jimmy F. Alcala
News Editors Antonio T. Carpio Jr. • Chief Page One Specialists Mario R. Fuentes
Chief News Desk Chief Ruben C. Almadrones
National Editor Philbert B. Bocobo Jr.
Senior Desk Editor Jaime V. Ramirez Jr.
Editorial Desk Coordinator Rosario Dorotan
Chief Photographer Edwin G. Sarmiento
Art & Design Director Lisa M. L. Palabrica
Board Chairman Marixi R. Prieto
President Alexandre Pierre Romualdez
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing Beatriz R. Mendoza
VP for Advertising Felix R. Guzon
AVP for Circulation Emilio Benito R. Tan

All rights reserved.
Reproduction of the whole or any part of this publication without the written permission of the publisher is prohibited.
Use for non-exclusive photocopying and distribution in print and electronic form of individual articles may be obtained through the Philippine Daily Inquirer.
For permission to reproduce articles, please contact the publisher.

Now it is a P700-M scam at DepEd

AS THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION WINDS to a close, few officials are scrambling to provide for their future. They are underlying modified "golden parachutes" to ride them out when they are out of cushy government jobs. That is coming sooner than we think. In three and more months, elective officials are losing signed and public officials are becoming mere writers. Hundreds of millions of pesos are being diverted into the pockets of corrupt officials. Abe-Serob na. It is like the hunting that almost always happens when a war comes to a close.

The latest scam discovered by Sen. Mar Roxas is over P700 million (the hottest scam at the Department of Education (DepEd). Roxas called for vaccines are children, and it is taking place at the Department of Education. It is the department's Food for School Program that for years has provided nutritional supplements to malnourished children like the rice-fish meal powdered milk supplied by the three months during the May-ora ora and lapse during the August years. The time, the food being supplied is needless, but needless that are very expensive. What ordinarily cost P5 a package, Roxas discovered, is being sold to the DepEd at P20 a pack. That's an over price of more than three times!

In the first Senate committee hearing on the issue, Roxas also discovered that only one company, Jocoya Manufacturing Inc., has been allowed the contracts to supply instant noodles that the GMA administration has substituted as nutritional supplement for grade-school children and preschoolers nationwide.

Does officials of the DepEd who awarded last Wednesday's committee hearing were shocked upon learning that Jocoya has been supplying the department's requirements of instant noodles since 2007?

Were public bidding held for the award of the supply contracts as the law requires? If there were, then the contracts must have been awarded to the highest bidder, not the lowest. Why is the DepEd paying P20 for each packet of instant noodles that costs only P5 in the market? To whom will the overprice go? Who authorized the payment of

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

P700 million to the noodle factory?

And why noodles? Noodles are nothing but flour, salt and monosodium glutamate (vetsin). It has very little nutritional value. What's wrong with steamed rice? Or the nutrition which is very nutritious?

I'll tell you why it is instant noodles and not rice or cornflour. It is because Jocoya manufactures noodles, not cornflours or rice.

The victims of government scams are getting very common. First it was the old people who have to pay absolutely high prices for their multivitamin drugs. Then it was the high school and college students whose educational plans painfully their parents were spoil instead to line the pockets of unscrupulous businessmen. Now senior-5- and 6-year old's have not been spared.

Who will be next? Are those fatuous twits now plotting to steal from infants or even from unborn babies?

• • •

The Philippine aviation industry is encountering turbulence since and may crash if we do not take stricken maneuvers quickly. The European Union (EU) has banned Philippine flights to Category 2 from Category 1. What this means, as explained at the Coalition to Stand for Unity by Transportation Secretary Jesse Lantion and retired Col. Eduardo Jamir of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), is that while Philippine pilots are technically open to American carriers, Philippine pilots are not additional. Philippine airliners. Philippine Airlines has bought seven new, more economical planes, the first of which is arriving in a couple of months. But SIA cannot use them to change the old, gas-guzzling Airbuses that fly to the US although they are of the same size and capacity. The reason is safety, according to the IATA. Not the safety of the airplanes themselves, but of air carriers.

What Philippine airports have to do with the safety of Philippine planes landing on American airports is beyond me, but that is the excuse of the Americans to clinch the deck against their competitors in the trans-Pacific market.

The Fed, Lantion and Jamir explained, could periodically the aviation industry of countries whose airports fly to the US and subsidies. Some of our airports were found to be unsafe. The runway at Catarman, Samar, for example, is also used by residents of two barangays and their livestock. The runway of Laguindingan airport in Misamis Oriental and the airport manager's residence are in the same lot.

Inal except for the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, our airports have no radar. We also do not have enough competent air controllers. In the 1984 raid, Abe, our Civil Aviation Authority is dependent on the budget given by Congress so that it does not have enough funds to buy aviation equipment and upgrade the salaries of its controllers and train new ones.

It is correct that, a law has just been passed to make the CAAP independent operationally and financially. All the revenues it earns can now be spent by it for radar and other avionics technology that it needs. And it can now raise the salaries of its air controllers to attract back Filipino pilots who have been pirated by other airlines, especially the new Middle East business airlines that staff their cockpits with experienced pilots, airline executives, etc. printed from the Philippines.

But that takes time, and the SIA is due to build an apple this October. That's barely five months away. If the situation has not improved, the EU will not lift its ban on Philippine carriers—and you know what that means to our airlines.

Due process

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THERE IS NO GRAND CONSPIRACY, SAYS IT is Valenzuela, GMA vice president for communication, explaining the case of wiretapping she filed against Cheche Lazaro. "There are no evil, one scheme. Definitely there is no concerted effort to nullify press freedom. I pursued my rights, taking the issue of due process."

Well, she may have redoubted on a process, but there's nothing else about it.

In fact, there's nothing one about it, which you would already have guessed from her case against Lazaro being wiretapping and not libel. Not to like accusing a priest of pedophilia. It's villainy enough in itself.

The case stemmed from Lazaro's "Probe Team" doing a story on the GMA's pension-based policy which apportions benefits according to pensions rather than length of service. The public school teachers have raised a stink over this, saying it shortchanges them. "Probe" invited the GMA to air its side. It refused, sending instead a letter explaining why it did not wish to. Its reasons were: one, being a Lopez company, ABS-CBN could not be trusted to be objective about the GSIS; and, two, the time was too short. Probe gave it more than enough time—a week—but it matter. It refused to participate. Probe went ahead with the telephone conversation. And sure fullness, it was how Raoul Lazaro ends up being the star in Wiretapping Lite prominently because the Malacañang did not consent to it.

What's weird about it is that unless someone asks otherwise, it is standard practice for media to record conversations to make sure they do not quote people wrong. It is for their protection. Should it have been Lazaro if Cheche had memorized their conversation and quoted her freely afterward?

See that is nothing. What is even weirder is that Lazaro expressly, specifically and unequivocally informed Velez-Lopez that was recording the conversation, and Manezonia agreed. That exchange is right there in the recording.

Which brings us to what is quite possibly going to be the weirdest thing of all. That is that, as with the "Hello, Garci" tape, which the government refused to accept as evidence, unlawfully saying that it was first presented by the press secretary if Lazaro's recording is similarly rejected as evidence, the only law her word for it. Manezonia has already deposed that Lazaro made no such statement. Truly the GMA rules is more contagious than swine flu.

That is not harassment? That is not a story finger-raised-at-press freedom? That is not undue process?

Had it been another journalist, it might be possible to harbor some doubt that he or she might have resorted to underhanded tricks to get a scoop or pin someone down to a scandal. But the only scandal here is the GMA's refusal to be accountable to its constituents, who also pay for their salaries as taxpayers. The only scoop here is that the GSIS actually gives the public school teachers benefits, however inconsiderate. Not quite incidentally, the journalist involved is Cheche Lazaro, who did her damnedest to help the cause of the public school teachers' complaints about it are fairly recent.

Quite apart from all that, the journalist in question is Cheche Lazaro. She and "Probe" have not become household names by practicing shoddy journalism. For her to be threatened with jail is the least of it. For her to be accused of doing so, that is the true outrage.

It is no small irony that Wiretapping, who merely murdered Winston Garcia's position here, should cite as reason for the GSIS's refusal to join its side in "Probe" its belief that ABS-CBN is naturally biased against the GSIS. Lazaro did explain to her that though "Probe" was housed in that station, it was fiercely independent in practice by its track record.) So the GSIS has an infinitely better chance of getting fair treatment in "Probe" than Lazaro has of getting fair treatment in this regime's legal system.

There is nothing else about its process, which is why people like Garcia resign in protest (the latest was retired justice of the supreme court Jose Melo) or like Solomon like resorting to it. There is a process that has so far not failed to send the one who called up Garci, the perpetrators of 911, the ones generals, the World Bank economists and those who bypassed a Legacy of Love, but not Lazaro. Not even the chief of Justice Malpaco—while drawing under its gaze, or boss, Jun Lozada, Ben Gaston and Cheche Lazaro. Gotter has just had an old case against him revived. To call this due process is to call the legal persecution of Marcos' enemies during martial law due process.

You refuse to appear in a program you deem biased, and the worst that can happen to you is that you are put in a bad light. You refuse to appear in a court, and the least that can happen to you is that you get jailed. Look at Lozada who refused to post bail. Garcia, who is in the GSIS as Dracula is to a blood bank, gets to sit in his chair sipping coffee while Lazaro, who is in journalism as Mother Teresa is to Calcutta, gets to stew in a Pasay City trial court to answer her provisional library. The unfairness of it makes the blood boil.

This is an attempt to muzzle the press, as brazenly as it comes. Indeed, this is an attempt to muzzle the public, as unduly as any dictatorship's "due process." The sudden deluge of suits that has muddied closer upon prominent critics of the regime like Lozada, Lazaro, the media and murderers that muddle like a flood down the corridors of power are a clear sign this regime is treating the matters to see how far it can go. It is also a clear sign this regime has no intention of leaving. It will employ force, repression and corruption—which is what all this "due process" is—to keep power.

Surely it's past due we gave this regime its due!

Is the US a UN member?

COMMENTARY

Nelson D. Lavilla

LANCE CPL. DANIEL SMITH WAS ACQUITTED last month by the Court of Appeals on a charge of raping a Filipina woman. Before his final release, he was confined at the US Embassy under the terms of a confidential exchange of notes, signed by Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon, amending the Visiting Forces Agreement. There were renewed calls for the termination of the VFA, conveniently used to fan downed upon Filipino militancy and nationalism that the VFA is needed under US law.

Before the CA decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the VFA is constitutional. The four justices of this Philippine Supreme Court, who voted to nullify the VFA, declared unconstitutional, many years been denied by the recent pronouncement of the US Supreme Court in the case of Medellin vs. Texas. Penned by Chief Justice Roberts, Medellin stubbornly and fundamentally altered long-settled rules on treaty interpretations of treaties under the prevailing convention, and contradicted a host of other authorities, including distinguished legal advisers to the State Department, from Green Haywood Hackworth to Marjorie Whiteman.

The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties synthesizes basic principles. International agreement between or among states is respected and enforced as treaties, whatever they may be known as or named in good faith. Particular covenants. The terms of the treaty cannot be negated by a local constitution or law. Treaties are sovereign contracts.

As stressed by former Chief Justice Jose Vitug, draft, since the beginning of government, the US has entered into executive agreements consisting of various forms and designations. Those concluded with the concurrence of the senate are referred to as treaties. Without such concurrence, the international agreement is called an executive agreement. Both are equally binding upon the nation.

When the Philippines was following rules of the game, we were American practices and procedures. After all, the 1935 Constitution was a carbon copy of the US Constitution. However, the Philippines declared their genuinely accepted principles of international law are deemed part of the law of the land.

Medellin at once sweeps these notions aside. As reviewed by former Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban, the Roberts tersely means that: first by to be enforceable in the US, the agreement must have the concurrence of the US Senate; finally, only without such concurrence, a treaty, like the 2001 Convention on Consular Relations is ruled by Medellin, must be enacted into local law. Or the treaty must be self-executory.

Most treaties between the US and the Philippines are not self-executory like the 1951 Mutual Defense Agreement, the 1947 Military Bases Agreement. In fact, the RP-US Treaty of Amity was executed in by the US Senate. The various implementing or amending agreements to the MBA, mostly in the form of exchanges of notes, did not have concurrence by the Senate of both states. On the other hand, the MBT, even if concurred in by the US Senate, was not embodied in a domestic legislation. Moreover, the MDT is not self-executory. The VFA was meant to be an implementing agreement of the MDT.

The obvious conclusion is, by the terms of the Medellin, the MDT and the VFA are not enforceable domestically. Granting that they are not invalid internationally, they have to be invoked before the International Court of Justice. But the implementation of a favorable decision of the ICJ, further granting that the US gave its consent to be sued, was not actually to be found lacking by merely the approval of the US Security Council, if the US exercises the ICJ decision.

It will be recalled that the secretary of foreign affairs, in Mendez vs. Ermita, was directed by the Supreme Court to forthwith conduct negotiations with the proper US authorities regarding the interpretation of United States by Philippine authorities. However, Secretary Alberto Romulo hesitated and turned on the task, making a contempt citation by the Court. Other officials have been similarly hesitating. Hence, it appears that for as long as our foreign policy makers have allowed Filipino Congressmen, negotiations on Smith's incarceration by a Philippine prison would have continued to be stalled—until Smith was finally acquitted.

It is a legal oddity that the VFA appears to be interdependable in the US under the terms of Medellin because the concurrence of the Philippine legal counterpart? Hence of Medellin. In this regard, we are constrained to ask: is the United States still a bona fide member of the United Nations, under the US ruling in Medellin? For even if the US Senate concurred in the ratification of the UN Charter, we are not aware that the instrument has ever been incorporated into local federal law. Moreover, as more provisions of the US Charter are broad declarations of principles, they are not self-executory. Apparently, Medellin vs. Texas has effectively put into question the membership in the UN of the only remaining superpower on earth.

The Medellin case is the latest in the recent conservatism of the Bush administration. Latitudinarian, for instance, invented due to violations of human rights have been evaded by the relaxation of torture centers to other venues like Guantanamo. The growing tendency of the US since the time of Roosevelt Hughes up to George Bush is free itself from treaty obligations—from non-selection of ballistic missiles to restrictions to the improvement of the environment, from reluctance on US peace-keeping operations to accordance on withdrawals of international crimes—but rarely been more flagrant than in the Medellin ruling. The US, in one stroke, has been rendered supreme in treaty-making.

Nelson D. Lavilla is a retired ambassador.

A Maranao epic

I WAS RECENTLY GIVEN A DVD COPY OF A PLAY "KOG: Pakkilingapinahanan ni Radia Bintan Ajmal," which was presented at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. It had a full array of costumes and props reflecting the play's setting in Maranao culture.

The quality of the production was quite high, and made all the more striking because the actors and actresses were all children.

Not only that, they were mere children.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

The play was a production of the University of Manila's Office of Extramural and Continuing Education, which handles the university's volunteer programs. Under this office is a street kids program directed by professor Arnolfo Esguerra, who also wrote the play.

The play was produced on a very low budget: a P60,000 grant from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), supplemented by donations from private groups and companies, and the Cultural Center of the Philippines making some facilities for cards. The rest

Most important, though, was the volunteer time that went into the production. C. J. Sendaza of Dasi dei Media Productions volunteered to be creative director, no small task when you think of how rowdy street children can be.

Theater has a way of tuning the spirit and the production of "Radia Bintan Ajmal" showed this. It was amazing how synchronized the children were, whether singing, acting as a chorus, playing bamboo instruments and the balintang, or going through choreographed scenes. The movements were important because they symbolized particular activities, from courtship to warfare.

Morality play

Many groups have used theater to try to get street children back into the mainstream. Theater is uses mainly as alternative recreation for the children, helping them to build self-esteem and team spirit. Some advocates of children's theater, especially with street children, talk about theater as therapy, helping the children to overcome their torment of the world, and distrust of institutions mainly.

"Mama Apan" reminds us though of still another function of theater: when you have children acting out a story, they internalize the characters, the story lines, and the intended messages of the play.

Esguerra's choice of "Mama Apan" was a wise one because it is a play full of social messages, almost of it a century morality play, complete with stock colloquialisms like "pog" (handsome). So, the story is actually quite old-fashioned, from the Maranao and based on a still older story which I'll explain shortly.

The plot is complicated: Radia Mandandri and Mahmudin Ajmal's jewels disappear in misery. But there's a villain here, Radiya Bangsamoro, who hires a canang on a search to capture Mandandri's inheritance (loosely, her spirit, not quite the soul but her personhood and dignity).

Once the ridiculous is lost, the person's inability of spirit is lost as well, and the happiness with Mandandri's reuniting is a reunion of spirit and personhood.

A lot ridiculous can be suggested only by another person who has wisdom that comes out of generosity and a pure heart. The character with these attributes is Mandandri's younger brother, Bintan Apan. The title of the play, describing Bintan Apan's difficult task, is most appropriate: "pakkilingapinahanan" means "to look for someone" in many areas, with all its connotations. Those the time quite often missing seventeen numbers about to leave the Philippines and watching this play reminded me of what our workers have to go through, negotiating with vendors and agents to recapture the goodness and dignity of their families.

The message of the play is simple, and cannot be counter argued by the end. There has to be goodness of heart and generosity. In one scene, the young take Bintan Apan to encounter his kin or cursed, highlighting the message that weapons or force will not be the key to Bintan Apan's quest. To accomplish his task, Bintan Apan has to answer riddles posed by the kin, which test his wisdom, his inner force, and his many challenges, and the importance of wisdom.

There are many twists and turns to the story, including even those for the villain, Bangsamoro, whose own ridiculous is embarrassed, highlighting how wrong doing produces risks for the perpetrator as well.

I can imagine how the street children came to understand the play's messages while rehearsing and acting out the play. Imagine the children playing out the exchange between the young and Mama Apan consisting of riddles. "What is higher than the sky?" asks the young. Bintan Apan answers, "Your (mercy)." And what, the young proceeds to ask, is softer than the wind? Bintan Apan answers, "Beg ing" (the child).

Traditional tale

The plot of the story may have sounded familiar to some readers, especially those who have been exposed to "Ramayana." And that shouldn't be surprising since the Maranao "Darangen" is actually based on the Indian epic.

Except for Bintan, the central all the Southeast Asian countries in the world of characters. I've always been amazed at how "Ramayana" is so much loved. Although associated with Hindu culture, it is economical, now entrenched in predominantly Buddhist and Muslim countries in the region.

Everywhere in Southeast Asia, the epic has made its way into local culture. Children are named after characters in the epic. The story itself is despite its lush, exciting, and most importantly acted out in theater. "Ramayana" theater varies, ranging from high brow grand artistic productions originally intended for the aristocracy to much simpler productions performed out in the streets, for example, as wayang kulit (puppets) in Indonesia.

Seeing "Ramayana" everywhere in Southeast Asia, I used to wonder why it was almost completely unknown in the Philippines. Some Filipinos will vaguely remember some reference in the epic in a high school or college course, or will recall one hazy theater production some years ago, but other than, it has no meaning for most Filipinos.

It was only in recent years that I learned that "Ramayana" did make it to the Philippines, but as "Darangen." Rama is encountered in the Maranao epic as Radia Diqdat Mangindilir, Sawara is Sinbanding (Maharaja) Lorenza (Sumaran) becomes Lakamarna.

The spread of "Ramayana" from India to Southeast Asia reminds us that globalization is not new. But the Maranao adaptation also tells us that amid globalization, there is localization to give meaning to the epic. Perhaps that is why "Ramayana" so much that the original Indian epic is barely recognizable.

Esguerra acknowledges his debt to still another version of Darangen, produced in 1999 by IKSA, and entitled "Kog: Pagkabihag ni Radiya Bintu Apan." I'll do a post very indeed, and from "Ramayana" to "Darangen," from India to the Philippines, we need more plays like "Radiya Bintu Apan" in and out of our schools to help us learn more to life, and the struggles between good and evil.

* * *

Email: mtan@inquirer.com.ph

Nuclear is not the answer

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

CLIMATE CHANGE HAS SEIZED THE ATTENTION of much of the world, the economic meltdown atmosphere, affecting policy-making. Rising sea levels, shifting weather patterns and more ferocious storms dislocations, floods, drought, excessive rainy rain levels water scarcity, deforestation, bleached coral, and the resulting food insecurity—all these have left us and governments in a scrambling for solutions and ways to mitigate, or at least delay, the worst effects of climate change.

One of the options being offered is nuclear energy, supposedly a "low carbon" alternative to conventional means of energy generation, much of which is heavily dependent on fossil fuels, like oil or gas, and largely responsible for so-called "greenhouse gases" emissions.

But is nuclear energy really the "clean" alternative to our energy woes? Will it really bring an end to our dependence on fossil fuels that, as survivalists remind us, is the primary cause of global warming and climate change?

Some of our legislators apparently believe so, and they are calling for the "rehabilitation" of the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant to generate electricity. Some of these legislators in the past decade in Bataan has organized gatherings and processions to express the people's anger and alarm, since the plant was shut down in the 1980s (primarily due to fault lines found in the plant's location) only to end despite lush and the corruption and many defects attending its construction.

To forestall the reopening of the BNPP, Greenpeace has brought in Yves Marignac, an international consultant on nuclear safety and efficiency, who is executive director of WISE-Paris, an organization dedicated to "promoting independent information and well-informed decision making" regarding the use of nuclear energy for power generation.

* * *

THE day we met, Marignac was supposed to brief some senators on the issue. He was asked to shed to assist with the deans committee the next day for the same purpose.

A mathematician by training, Marignac says he has been going around the world talking about the French "success story in nuclear power." Because French President Nicholas Sarkozy "has been aggressively promoting the French nuclear industry," convincing governments in the developing world to invest in nuclear power with the help of French companies to build such plants.

France is extraordinarily committed to nuclear power generation, with 59 reactors around the country, and some still under construction. But a report on the "French nuclear industry, published by Global Chance, an association that includes among its members several of France's independent nuclear experts, shows that "France's nuclear premises are a dangerous illusion ... backed in by nuclear power in a way that gives cause for alarm to the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures."

As Marignac puts it, the French nuclear power industry "is not the success story it claims to be, not at all." Shortly after World War II, he recounts, France was a greatly diminished country, greatly damaged in the course of liberation from the Nazis, with its image and pride badly wounded. Charles de Gaulle, the French leader, sent who presided over France's post-war recovery, decided to plump headlong into nuclear power, primarily for military use and later for "peaceful" purposes, with an opposite mode to "nationalistic and self-sufficiency."

* * *

FRANCE'S entry into nuclear power was met with surprising national consensus, with "both Gaullists and communists agreeing on the program," says Marignac.

And despite catastrophes like Chernobyl and the planned of nuclear power by other European countries like Italy, Germany, Belgium and Spain, France has produced to complete its nuclear power program and is even now actively campaigning among foreign governments, including Libya, Iran and some countries in Africa, to go nuclear themselves.

Marignac has many tables and charts to show how power generated by nuclear plants provides only a small percentile of the total energy required by the French people, mainly because so much of the energy is used for heating. He also says that it also makes short shrift of claims by the nuclear governments that nuclear power enables the French to escape overall dependence on foreign fossil fuels. What he knows fails to mention, says Marignac, is that France's only source of uranium for NPPs, mostly from former colonies, thus continuing dependence on foreign "fuel."

There is also the question of security surrounding the transport of nuclear fuels to the plants. He cites uranium processing plant in northern France to the various power plants around the country. The trucks transporting the uranium are vulnerable to more radioactivity, says Marignac, since terrorists hijackers, or terrorists.

* * *

BUT the main drawback to an energy program dependent on nuclear power, says Marignac, is that "it aggravates the problem from the wrong end."

In his view, any long-term solution to our dependence on fossil fuels must be addressed from the "demand side," that is, reducing power consumption in the first place by cutting down electricity use. Not only is nuclear power dangerous, expensive and wrought with untold health and security issues, it ultimately will not solve the problem of reducing emissions, he says. Even if we have nuclear plants, even with 50 nuclear power plants, the French remain as dependent on fossil fuels as ever.

Our 'pasaway' culture

LOOKING BACK

Sembodh G. Goyanko

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID FOR AND AGAINST Manolo Stevens's pop rendition of our National Anthem, a performance that has lost some of its initial gubernatorial thrill. Right here and now, I will just wish to add the last word before we move on to the next big issue and forget about flag and anthem since again.

After the fine tribute of the fight, the delayed version by Julie Iglesias aired on CNN-7 was still all to incorporate some commercials, then Philippine Airlines then twice while Stevens sings the altered anthem in the background.

Stevens started slowly, as normally as one does the National Anthem, but the slowest speed in the gathering of the Senate finished in one minute where he entered a high note. This was not lost on the audience which roared him out of the ring as the most awaited flight could begin. After the anthem, his a split second, the end of the National Anthem, the audience was finished in one minute with the words, "Approved by the National Historical Institute." The use of the oval was nonetheless used.

Assuming that the NHI approved the Stevens version of the anthem was a misrepresentation. It was silly.

I spoke out in outside Stevens and others who want to copy or emulate him that what the National Anthem is not an ordinary piece of music that can be arranged and sung in any way one's mood's musical taste. Our anthem, by law, should be sung or played as close as possible to the original composed by Julian Felipe in 1898. But the NHI is no longer silent would have no one being remiss in remembering aspects of the flag law.

To call public attention to the bounds of the law it seems by some to be petty and lacking in points. Now I am charged with going against freedom of expression and artistic freedom.

Without a Flag Law, there would be no issue here. But even the Cabinet secretary, instead of following the NHI's recommend as it were, spoke from a Malacañang perch and prejudged the issue in Stevens's favor.

The Senate declared the law concluded, thus encouraging more Stevens copycats. I say naive to believe that we are a country of laws; if we do not agree with a law, we work for its repeal or amendment, but while it is in force we should set a example to people follow it.

These lawmakers did not realize that the NHI has been following up amendments to the Flag Law since January that would allow a number of things, for example, the proper use of the flag on its representation in clothing and other objects. Our police and military have flags on their uniforms, as do our Olympic team. Will we make them liable under the law?

To repeat: Like laws, I should call attention to Stevens's version of the anthem was disrespectful at the side of his face the position. Facing the stylized flag on the carpeting was unlawful.

Worse, the flag was depicted the wrong way! While I agree that President was fighting for the artistic freedom of people, it was not appropriate to display our flag the way it should be in time of war.

Ignorance of the law excuses no one, and executives would accept a sincere apology. Stevens has to be fair to himself by willing to give thanks to the benefit of the doubt because nobody knowingly disrespects our flag and anthem, but then Ryan Cayabyab who was given a CD copy of the arrangement by Stevens, Cayabyab fight have advised Stevens not to alter the anthem.

That Americans play and mangle their anthem is their business, not ours. That Americans have their flag under the protection of free speech is their business, not ours. This is precisely the reason why we have laws to protect our flag and anthem from desecration. Recall that Ramos signed into law at the height of the 1998 Philippine Centennial.

Reading amendments to the Flag Law, I plan to convene a meeting of desire of cultural entities, artists, composers, arrangers and others including actors to discuss and define the parameters of the playing and singing of the anthem. These schools should be extended to revive respect for flag, anthem and the nation these represent.

Stevens's version of the National Anthem was first heard from before by those who want the Flag Law enforced, and resented from above by others who disagree and insist that the NHI be under the law! I is supposed to attain license. I will leave all this to the wisdom of the Supreme Court.

In respect for the flag and anthem irrelevant is one issue? If it is considered petty to enforce a simple law, how do we expect others to follow greater, more difficult laws?

Two days after the game, Inquirer fellow wrote about our "damaged culture" and treated a valedictorian. We should update this to "pasaway culture" of our times.

Finally, do we have issues with authority and law? Drivers given as a basic Filipino and Instincts went against Spanish laws and became heroes. Aguinaldo went against American laws and became a hero. Jose Abad Santos went against Japanese laws and became a hero. Today we carry a number of laws, some unjust, with Filipinos pushing laws for Filipinos who unfortunately have been instructed by conditioned to flout the law and hope to get away with it. Read the exchange on whether or not Stevens was right or wrong, and ask yourself why laws are made, to control or serve our purposes. Why can we not agree on how to best respect the symbols of the nation?

I should blame history for this confusion, but that is another story. I should blame ourselves and our passing values.

Comments are welcome at sembodh@inquirer.com.ph

Meco supported Alcaraz from the start

YOUR EDITORIAL "NEEDS, THEN CONCERN," (Inquirer, 5/6/09) was hasty on the prejudiced views of a certain interest group on the case of Cecilia Alcaraz Alcantara.

It was highly unfair to the men and women of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (Meco), who do their best to serve some 100,000 Filipinos in Taiwan.

It was unfair to accuse Meco of not having given adequate attention to Cecilia's case. In Taiwan, the victim's relatives and some Taiwan media have accused it of executing undue pressure on the appellate Court, to reduce Cecilia's sentence to life imprisonment, from the original verdict of death.

Meco has great respect for Taiwan's judicial system and processes, and would not in any way seek to unduly influence those. In Cecilia's case Meco only ensured that her legal and civil rights were fully protected.

The editorial quoted me as suggesting that "if Alcaraz continues to insist on her innocence, she could lead to another trial and, possibly, another death sentence." I never said this at all.

It is also said Meco seems to be unaware that the latest verdict would not be the end of the legal process. We are very aware that they will still be automatically reviewed by the Taiwan Supreme Court.

In Taiwan media, the murder victim's family is also to appeal the verdict with the court.

Because of this, Meco has assured Cecilia of its continued support in her legal action, Her lawyer will still discuss this with her after receiving the decision.

I am strongly disowning the assertions, based on the Internet groups claim, that Meco did not provide timely and full assistance to Cecilia. I sent you a full version of this letter with the errata showing.

2. From the start, Meco supported Cecilia's family in every way it could.

3. Only becoming this no less than her life was at stake. It is insulting to say that Meco needed prodding to aid Cecilia.

2. Meco ensured Cecilia had full legal support in all phases of her case, and Meco will be there for Cecilia up to the review by the Taiwan SC.

3. The Ma Ying-jeou based on her professions of innocence of the crimes she is accused of.

4. Meco has gone beyond providing her legal and immediate needs. It brought several family members to Taiwan to visit her, and coordinated with Congress, Legislator's officials, and other groups to enable her aid for her and her family.

5. Cecilia has expressed her thanks in a visit by Benidorm Representative Antonio J. Inaldo, to the government and others that have aided her.

—ARTHUR A. ABRAZA JR.,
assistant corporate secretary,
Manila Economic and Cultural Office

CA justices under the influence of 'political alcohol' when they decided case vs Smith

THE COURT OF APPEALS' DECISION TO acquit Lt. Marine Daniel Smith of the crime of rape was obviously made in haste and under the unnecessary influence of political alcohol during the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). The decision should outrage all patriotic Filipinos—men and women alike.

In particular, Gabriela finds the decision offensive to the Filipina women's movement that has fought to advance a more thorough understanding of rape as an inhuman crime against women.

In order to absolve Smith—and insulate the VFA from public outrage—the court disregarded the evidence and hours of Justice Benjamin Pozon's decision convicting Smith. Smith was heavily intoxicated and rendered unconscious at the time the rape occurred. Smith was aware that Nicole was unconscious and took advantage of her situation; Nicole did not consent as she tried to fight back despite her state of unconsciousness.

In total credence to the appellant's arguments, the court resorted to maligning Nicole. This single lapse sees the line of reasoning of Justice Rhodin Thupeinen in the court's decision and grounds for such decision impact not only on Nicole but on all women victims of rape who seek justice before the courts. The ruling undermines the progress made so far by the Philippines' government to push for a fair and just legal treatment of the crime of rape, and for the judiciary to fully comprehend the economy of rape. The decision is a throwback to the Dark Ages! Consider of rapist—that only a woman of unchaste virtue, such as a "shameless prostitute" can be raped, that a woman who does not consciously fight back with all available limbs—her state of unconsciousness notwithstanding—consents to the sexual act, and that there is no such thing as date rape, only "spontaneous, unplanned romantic episode."

It is even more infuriating how the court took a shot at trivializing rape by implying that it is absurd to think that American soldiers would rape an unconscious woman because, more than anything, they are afraid to violate their carbon Despite decades of Philippine experience of US troops abusing and exploiting the country's women and children, the court made it appear that US soldiers are like law scouts who strictly follow rules and regulations.

The three justices behind the decision were seemingly out of sound mind when they undermined the local rape case. They must have been under the influence of something more threatening than alcohol, possibly political pressure.

It is lamentable that they played a role in the perpetuation of this grave injustice to Filipino women and to Philippine sovereignty. Their decision only upholds the tragic reality that the criminals of the VFA (soldiers) are at right for justice being pursued by Filipinos abused by US troops; it also renders hostile Philippine laws and criminally puts to naught our national sovereignty.

—CHRISTINE HERMS,
secretary-general,
Gabriela National Alliance
of Women in the Philippines;
EMERLINDA R. TABOY,
Bayanan Laging Handa, QC

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Blumentritt Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for confirmation purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

United Nations urged to take decisive action against Somali pirates

THE UNITED NATIONS SHOULD ACT decisively against the Somali pirates. The world cannot stand idle as these pirates attack ships of various nationalities with impunity and then demand millions of dollars for the release of the vessels, cargoes and crewmen. The many here in that some of the vessels carry humanitarian aid for impoverished Africans.

Most of the crewmen now being held hostage are Filipinos. Because their lives are in danger and many of them have been held hostage for quite some time, the Philippines would want the United Nations to address this piracy problem with urgency.

I suggest that the UN convene the Security Council to appoint a coalition army using a UN maritime task force to combat the Somali pirates. A few countries, including the United States, have sent naval forces into the area. But the navies are engaged in individual actions against the pirates. Not only should these forces be complemented by the navies of other UN-member countries, an overall task force commander should also be named to coordinate military operations in preserving ships and fighting the pirates. The ships, cargoes and crewmen now being held hostage by the pirates should be liberated —by force, if necessary.

The government of Somalia, attacked by international bodies, admitted it is helpless to stop the piracy. The admission justifies UN action to deal with the problem. If the pirates resist, they should be blasted off the face of the earth. All pirates captured by the UN forces should be tried by the International Court of Justice.

—GUILLERMO G. SAMSON,
41 Molave St., Kaulayan City

ZestAir

MAS REFRESHING MAG-KOMYUT!

ALL YEAR-ROUND COMMUTER FARE!

ZA COMMUTER ROUTES:

P488
- CEBU
- ILOILO
- LEGASPI
- MARINDUQUE
- NAGA
- SAN JOSE, Mindoro
- TABLAS

P788
- BACOLOD
- CALBAYOG
- CATARMAN
- CALBAYOG
- CLARK*
- TACLOBAN
- VIRAC

P1,788
- DAVAO

- DOUBLE THE FUN to DAVAO!
- We are ADDING ADDITIONAL FLIGHTS to DAVAO in the evening effective May 16, 2009 utilizing the SPACIOUS, WIDE SEATS 162-seater AIRBUS 320.

We also fly to the following Leisure Destinations:

- BORACAY P788
- TAGBILARAN
- PUERTO PRINCESA
- BUSUANGA P488

A320 SPACIOUS LEGROOM & WIDE SEATS

MA60 ALL BRAND NEW!

SALE & TRAVEL PERIOD ON-GOING UNTIL 31 DECEMBER 2009

call 855.3333 or visit your favorite travel agent. Book & Buy now! visit www.zestair.com.ph

'Nursing competence' in the global market

ALLOW ME TO SHARE MY VIEWS ON THE present nursing curriculum and its impact on our nurses' education and global competitiveness.

The present four-year nursing program includes three summers. If a semester is equivalent to a semester, then the present nursing program is actually five and a half years long. Therefore, the proposal of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to add one more year to what is at present a four-year course—that is why it is now course without summers—is better for two reasons: (1) nursing students can enjoy a much-needed respite during summers, and (2) their parents will be given time to save money for the following semester.

However, we should not worry so much about the length of the program or the tuition fees to be paid. Let's rather focus on the proper implementation of the curriculum per se. The present curriculum is a well researched program that was carefully developed by our country's dedicated deans and noted nursing academicians in consultation with different nursing sectors and specialty groups. In fact, our nursing curriculum's conceptual framework and the nursing roles it espouses are universal, and has been accepted by our nursing colleagues globally. Given its content, the curriculum can be said to be in parallel with the global standards of nursing care and practices.

In spite of the many Filipino nurses given the chance to reach nursing subjects in the United States for more than 15 years, this is my observation: even though the US nursing program has two entry levels, the predominant one is the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN), a two-year nursing program with barely 600 actual nursing hours in the clinical areas, and it yields amazingly and consistently a very high passing performance in the nursing licensure (NCLEX-RN) examinations.

As to the Filipino nurses' global competitiveness, as this day they remain the number one choice of other countries trying to make up for their acute nursing shortage. Our nurses may be noted for being inherently caring, respectable and compassionate, but more importantly, knowing human and hospitals), especially in the United States, are now so convinced that the nurses they hire are truly trained in the western nursing practices and standards, or "globally competent."

Nursing competence (not the BSN degree or passing or topping the mandatory examination) is very crucial in the effort to prevent and totally eliminate nursing malpractice/negligence. It's a known fact that the United States is one of the most litigious countries in the whole world and yet it is clear the dedication of our nurses for long-term work issues.

Pats off and kudos to all our nurses in the academic arena!

—RESTY L. FRONCOSO, EdD, RNC, CEN, CCRN, DNAA,
chief operating officer, International Division,
SG-GEL Global Training Center,
drresty@yahoo.com

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

6,000 flee as Moro reb groups clash

MILF, MNLF leaders, supporters wage war in areas in 1996 peace pact

By Edwin O. Fernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—AT LEAST 6,000 PEOPLE HAVE fled their homes in coastal villages in Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat provinces amid continuing clashes between two Moro rebel groups, local officials and the military said.

Mayor Mamor Mamat of Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao, said the townsmen, mostly Maguindanaons, have built makeshift shelters in nearby villages.

Army Lt. Col. Jonathan Rosos, 6th Infantry Division spokesperson, said the armed conflict involved Army Capteofelag, said to be the chief of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) 104th Base Command, and Randy Kanos of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

Rosos said trouble started when Capteofelag and his men raided MNLF communities under Kanos in Barangay Tee, Lebak, Sultan Kudarat, last month in an apparent retaliation to attacks on the MILF officer's followers who roam MILF peace and development communities in Barangay Tee.

Kanos, a former natural and environment secretary of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said his men were simply enforcing a local ban on the carrying of firearms in peace and development areas identified in a peace agreement between the MILF and the government.

"It was a case of rido," Kanos said in a radio interview. "The military has now a peacekeeping force."

Last month, he said, Capteofelag's followers ambushed a vehicle of Kanos in Lebak, killing his driver and wounding two others, including his youngest brother Bobby, a village chief.

Since then, fighting between the two groups have erupted, forcing villagers to flee.

Early this week, about 500 MILF rebels were sighted in coastal villages near the borders of Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat, Rosos said.

Shigen Hassan and officials were underway to settle the dispute.

ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan has directed Tahir Kulah, health regional secretary, to attend to the health needs of the displaced families.

Ampatuan, in a statement, said the regional social welfare office has been providing food and other needs in the evacuees.

Sid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, acknowledged that Capteofelag is a rebel commander, but that the group was not supporting his quarrel with Kanos.

"We are helping resolve the conflict," Kabalu said in a text message.

Amnes Balang, a coastal village who fled to Cotabato City, said the situation in his community was worsening. "We were dislocated, our livelihood and source of income were gone; our farm produce were taken by the gunmen," he said.

Balang said the fighting might spread to nearby barangays.

NO JOY RIDE
Commuters in Baao, Camarines Sur take every spot available in a public utility jeep (PUJ) that plies the town. There are few scheduled trips in the town and a chance to hitch a ride on a passing PUJ is opportunity for many commuters no get to their destinations on time. MICHAEL ESPINOSA

36 cops in East Visayas face dismissal for raps

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

DAGUPAN CITY—At least 36 police officers in Eastern Visayas are facing separate complaints of grave misconduct in the regional office of the National Police Commission.

The lawmen were charged in 23 cases filed during the First Flex months. Last year, nine officers involved in seven cases were charged, according to lawyer Alfonso Tabuc, chief of the regional Inspectorate Section of the local division.

Of the 36 officers facing complaints since January, 23 have ranks of police officers 3, 2 and 1; eight are senior police officers; three are police inspectors; and two are senior police inspectors, Tabuc said.

The officers face dismissal from service, he said.

However, the Napolcom regional office only hears the complaints and gathers evidence before endorsing the cases to its central office, which will come up with a decision, Tabuc said.

Last year's nine cases are still pending at the central office, which has to decide on cases from all over the country, he added.

Tabuc said all the complainants were civilians.

"We have to remind our police officers that they should always act accordingly and should not abuse whatever power they have," he said.

ASTHMATIC TRAVELLER?
Bring a small nebulizer anywhere!

FAR EAST MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
FOR INQUIRIES: 09123915333

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION BY THE ON-GRID ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE RULES FOR SETTING THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES' WHEELING RATES

ERC CASE NO. 2009-007 WM

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that the Commission has scheduled the venue of the public consultation of the instant petition set on May 26, 2009 (Wednesday) at Alapang, La Trinidad, Benguet, in Baguio City Council Session Hall, Baguio City, Benguet.

Pasig City, May 13, 2009.

ATTY. GIOVANNI C. DEALSA
Attorney V

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION BY THE ON-GRID ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE RULES FOR SETTING THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES' WHEELING RATES

ERC CASE NO. 2009-007 WM

ORDER

On May 7, 2009, the Commission issued an Order for the venue of the public consultation of the instant case from Benguet Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s Session Hall, Baguio City, Benguet.

In the same Order, BENECO was directed to cause the publication of the aforesaid Order once (1x) in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines, at least ten (10) days before the scheduled hearing on May 26, 2009.

In view thereof, BENECO is hereby directed anew to cause the publication of the attached Notice of Public Hearing, at its own expense, once (1x) in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines, at least three (3) days before the hearing.

BENECO is further directed to post this Order and the attached Notice of Public Hearing in a conspicuous place within its premises and ensure that the same is at all times free from any obstruction or any other matter that may prevent any interested party from reading the contents of the posted Order and Notice.

It is also directed to employ other practical means for the public dissemination of this Order.

Finally, BENECO is directed to submit its proofs of compliance with the publication, posting and public dissemination requirements to the Commission on May 20, 2009.

SO ORDERED.

Pasig City, May 12, 2009.

FOR AND BY AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION:

(Sgd.) MARIA TERESA A.P. CASTAÑEDA
Commissioner

'Aramang' brings fortune to fishermen

By Ben Pfloes Elorez
Inquirer Northern Luzon

APARRI, CAGAYAN—OFFICIALS here are in an upbeat mood as a local resource known as aramang (Stereopodaxinensis) has brought fortune to fishermen and traders, and has introduced among them the value of conservation to sustain their livelihood.

And as a tribute to the benefits that the residents are getting, this town celebrated the Second Aramang Festival on May 1-11.

Aramang, or soft-shelled shrimp, is an endemic species in this coastal town in the northern edge of Luzon. It thrives at the estuarine area of the mighty Cagayan River.

Alice Sebastian, municipal agriculturist, says that while this fishery resource has long been around, its commercial value has only been discovered recently.

Using small boats or skiplet, hundreds of fishermen gather aramang.

Chain reaction

Hundreds more are employed in related industries, such as processing, drying and trading.

It is for this reason that aramang has been included in the One-Town One-Product (OTOP) program of the local government.

The Bureau of Agricultural Statistics said aramang production reached 4,161 metric tons in 2008. But Aparri once nearly lost this fishery treasure.

From 1989 to 1993, supply drastically decreased due to indiscriminate gathering. Fishermen agreed to limit the gathering of aramang from 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. and only every two weeks.

A common plan has been set to avoid competition.

From April to January, fishermen gather aramang. When a ban is imposed, a green flag is raised near the river mouth.

From 1989 to 1993, supply drastically decreased due to indiscriminate gathering

Ricardo Uson, a multi-awarded model fish farmer, says weeks have already rebounded and have not been threatened since.

Uson, who is also the vice chair of the Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (MFARMC), owns two of the 60 hauler or fishing boats used in catching the soft-shelled shrimps.

"I was able to send my seven children to college because of this venture," he says.

A hauler is a fishing boat with a catching gear, a drift. Here are attached to two wooden poles at its starboard. Dajek reached by the gear is 10 to 12 meters.

Dried shrimps

A crew of 15 fishermen is needed to counterbalance the boat and prevent it from tilting in one side and rolling over when there is abundant catch.

Aramang gatherers prefer to dry the shrimp than sell it fresh especially during summer. Buyers would transport fresh catch all the way to Bicol Metro for sun drying.

While there are a number of shrimp parts (hopong) processors here, scales of fresharamang are shipped to Pangasinan for the same purpose.

A trader, Estrella de la Cruz of Barangay Centro, says dried aramang costs P150 a kilogram. She has six regular employees who transport about 2,000 kg three times a month to Metro Manila.

A trader for seven years, De la Cruz says the area able to build a house, buy a cargo truck, and send her children to school from trading aramang.

Aside from being exported in raw material, aramang may soon hit the foreign market in processed form.

Cebelle Alunga, a nonnative, succeeded in processing aramang into such products as shrimp seasoning, shrimp paste (bamo, salted, spice), bagoong alimango, dried powdered aramang and aramang noodles.

She is now promoting aramang to various trade fairs and has been getting inquiries from international importers.

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

'Emong's' rampage a wake-up call

By Gabriel Cardenas
Bagnotan City

MAYOR HESTOR Peldo of Aiuls, Pangasinan, knew that Typhoon "Emong," like the few typhoons that had originated from the South China Sea in the past, would somehow affect his inland town when it moved closer to shore on Thursday.

Peldo thought of the small fishermen in his town's coastal villages, who might not have anything to eat if they wouldn't be able to go fishing because of huge waves and strong winds spawned by the typhoon.

He directed the town's social welfare and development officer to stockpile on relief goods for fishermen who might be displaced by "Emong."

In neighboring Bolinao, Mayor Alfonso Celeste knew that his town was in the direct path of the typhoon. Immediately he ordered the municipal disaster coordinating council to prepare evacuation centers, food and transportation, in case they would have to move people.

Celeste also sent home all local government employees living in inland villages because the area was expected to get rough in the afternoon and they might get stranded.

But both officials would later realize that no amount of disaster preparedness would have sheltered with a typhoon as strong as "Emong."

PHOTOS | For Bolinao, Pangasinan, engineers assess a section of a road where electric post were toppled by Typhoon "Emong's" strong winds. INQUIRER

When the skies cleared the following morning, on Friday, the two mayors could not believe that there was so much devastation in their towns.

Overwhelming

"The destruction was overwhelming. We were like in a war zone," said Peldo, whose town's aquaculture industry was almost wiped out. Ten persons died and 95 percent of all the houses on the island lost their roofs.

Celeste said an old stone Bolinao resident had told him it was the strongest typhoon ever to hit the town. At least 23 people, mostly caretakers of fish pens and cages, died and four others were reported missing.

Like in Aiuls, 95 percent of Bolinao's agriculture industry was destroyed by the typhoon. Ninety percent of the houses in the town also lost their roofs.

"We were no match to the typhoon. It was simply too strong," Celeste said.

> "We were no match to the typhoon. It was simply too strong"

But he said the municipal government's preparations still saved many lives. As early as 6:30 p.m. on May 7, when "Emong" began pummeling the town, rescue teams had been moving people to various evacuation centers.

"We were able to respond immediately and attend to their needs," he said.

Peldo said he'd they not been prepared, thousands of people in his town could have gone hungry the following day.

While a team distributed food, other groups cleared the roads of fallen trees and other debris. The clearing operations, however, turned out tense and then down.

Even members of the provincial disaster coordinating council, led by Gov. Amado Espino Jr., under the pelting rain and strong winds that night, were stranded in flood waters.

Scores of concrete electrical posts along the highway were knocked down. Espino had to call for heavy equipment to clear the roads.

Touching

Peldo said that if there was something touching in the height of the typhoon that night, it was the willingness of people to open their homes even to strangers who were in distress.

He said owners of big houses in the villages invited their neighbors, who see houses' roofs were blown away, to take shelter for the night.

"I was touched to know that many people were opening their homes to the victims," he said.

Celeste shared Peldo's experience. He said some big houses in Bolinao had been turned into evacuation centers. "This was because our schools were destroyed, our church lost its roof," Celeste said. "The best in everyone really comes out in a disaster like this."

Peldo said seeing people help one another and take care of each other had made the disaster easier to bear. He said his town's preparation before the typhoon helped ease the people's sufferings. "At least, of all, managing barrages (There didn't look too gruelled)," he added.

Celeste said people should have learned a very important lesson from this disaster: "Dapat sundin na nila ang mga warning namin (They should now heed our warning)."

He said many caretakers died because they refused to leave the fish pens and cages they were watching despite the warning.

"My wife voiced the concern at me with a public address system to warn them that a strong typhoon was coming," Celeste said. "Despite this, they persisted pa rin (some people still) ayaw to stay."

But now that the Bolinao people's experience from Emong may have been a "wake-up call."

"Maybe, we should go back to God," Celeste said.

MAG-HAPPY HOUR NA!
Book from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm & 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm.
Sale Period: May 13 - 15, 2009 • Travel Period: Sept. 1 - 30, 2009
MORE THAN 100,000 SEATS AVAILABLE!
GO LITE FARE HAPPY HOUR SEAT SALE
₱299 ALL DOMESTIC DESTINATIONS
₱599 ALL INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS*
*Seat Sale does not include Cebu - Japan
Quoted fares are one way. Limited availability
Domestic fares are all-in. International fares are exclusive of government taxes
Go Lite Fares are available upon booking for guests traveling without check-in baggage
Add ₱ 250 to fare if traveling with check-in baggage
Call (02) 70-20-888 in Manila, (032) 230-88-88 in Cebu or visit the travel agent near you.
CEBU PACIFIC AIR.COM

Diwalwal miners await 'Minahang Bayan' sites

By Frinston Lim
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—THREE GOLD-rush areas in Compostela Valley have been chosen as commercial mine sites or "Minahang Bayan" to help generate jobs and bring more revenues to the host municipality, officials said.

Sitios Bodiggan, Masara and Dian in Pantukan town will be declared commercial mining sites following the adoption of a resolution by the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRB) during a meeting last month.

The declaration aims to secure the livelihood of small-scale miners and ensure that the government receives its lion share of the revenues from extracted minerals, Gov Arturo Uy said.

It would also protect the small-scale miners from large mining operators, according to Eugene Aloba of the PMRB secretariat.

The declaration requires an executive order from the governor and approval from Environment Secretary Jaudon Atienza.

The new Minahang Bayan sites have a combined area of more than 200 hectares of land that has been found by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Southern Mindanao as feasible for gold mining, Atienza said.

The PMRB is composed of the MGB, the provincial government and representatives from the large-scale miners, the small-scale mining cooperatives and the religious (for the environment organization).

"We want to maintain order among small-scale miners to report for gold-rush areas. The provincial government will order a stop to (mining) operations and miners will be invited to see to it that no big players will enter the area," Uy said in explaining the dynamics of the Minahang Bayan.

Aloba said the areas would be opened to small-scale miners' cooperatives or federations, and each group would be allowed a stake of up to 81 hectares for mining.

Local authorities are optimistic that the bloody squabbles that had characterized gold-rush sites in the province in the past, including the infighting of miners in Diwalwal, would be lessened if not completely prevented in the Minahang Bayan sites.

Four Minahang Bayan areas had earlier been declared in the province, namely Matcobiangan in Nabunturan town, Besaran and New Leyte in Maco town and Tandik in Mawab town. These have been operational since 1998.

Under the new mining schemes, the government expects to collect taxes from the small-scale mining contracts it issued, with the barangay getting the heavy share of 40 percent and the municipal and provincial governments units, 30 percent each.

Aloba said the Minahang Bayan would also "rationalize mining" in the province by compelling miners to help in protecting environmental hazards.

"Smaller miners under the beneficiary cooperatives will be obliged to plant trees and properly dispose mining wastes, thereby reducing the ill-effects of mineral extraction towards the environment," Aloba, division head of the provincial agriculture office, said.

Aloba said the provincial government and even the host communities of the existing Minahan Bayan had yet to collect fees as mining operators had not submitted complete documents "due to financial and other constraints."

"We are promoting them (cooperatives) and things are going in order," Aloba said.

Several large-scale mining operators are sticking claims at the Diwalwal gold-rich mountain range, which includes Benguet Corp., one of the country's largest miners.

SCENE AT AN AREA ON MT. DIWALWAL. The shrinking mining community won't let go of its stake on the gold-rich mountain despite attempts to stop small-scale mining allegedly because of its unsafe practices.

Quadruplets' mom stays in RP for kids

By Bea Muno-Elevo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO, BENGUET—For the quadruplets in Barangay Quirino here, a mother's presence is always more important than wealth.

And so Elizabeth Cornos, 44, decided to abandon a job prospect overseas just to be with her children.

It was a reunion on Sunday as Elizabeth and her children—Mary Joy (Ting-ting), Mary Jane (Ming-ming), Mary Rose (Jingling) and Rhegence (Gingching), now 10—came to the Bible meetings at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses with their sister Imelan Leslie and sister Mayet, and other relatives.

Mayet said, because of their birth, he (and who) cannot be at each who has been our only friend especially during those trying times."

"The children's health is good and they are performing well in school," Elizabeth said of her quadruplets, who are all enrolling in Grade 5 next month.

She is happy that Mary Joy was given recognition as most thoughtful and most friendly during their recognition rites last month.

Elizabeth became the sole breadwinner and a single parent of her quadruplets after their father, Bernard, was murdered in Quezon City in 1999. The quadruplets were barely a year old then.

With his death, Elizabeth asked help from provincial officials to support her children, especially for their milk, clothing, education and medical expenses.

Among those who supported the family were Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Carlos Padilla, former Rep. Rodolfo Aguinaldo, Gov. Luisa Cuaresma, former Board Member Bel and now Judge Wenceslao Fortuna, Jordanian physician Ghoujeh Mahmoud Ashour, and sister Theresita Bonifilio of the St. Francis Mission here.

Aglayan's helped the family build a house in Barangay Quirino here. Padilla opened a savings account and helped raise funds for them.

Sister Theresita provided medicines and vitamin while Ursula sponsored the quadruplets' tuition at the Little Pillars Child Formation School in Solano town.

ELIZABETH Cornos and her quadruplets

RH bill backers plan nationwide candle rituals

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—MOTHERS AT least 11 Filipino women die daily because of childbirth and pregnancy complications, advocates of reproductive health bills pending in Congress will hold nationwide candle-lighting ceremonies on Wednesday to push for the passage of the bills.

Melissa groups will converge at 6 p.m. at the House of Representatives in Quezon City where a program will be held.

The activity will also be held in the cities of San Pablo and Legaspi in Luzon, Iloilo, Cebu and Tacloban in the Visayas, and Davao and Cotabato in Mindanao.

The activity, dubbed "Light a Candle, Save Mothers' Lives: A Tribute to Filipino Mothers," aims to highlight the country's high mortality rate and the support need to address this through the passage of the bills.

Daily toll

"Eleven women die daily or 4,000 yearly because of pregnancy and childbirth complications. No woman should die giving life," said Elizabeth Angeles, secretary general of the Philippine Health Advocacy Network (PHAN), in a press conference here on Tuesday.

Angeles, who is also the chair of the Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines, said House Bill No. 3222 and Senate Bill No. 3040 have been pending in Congress for the last several years.

She said the need for the law has become more urgent to prevent deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth complications, which are "preventable and curable."

Most vulnerable

The death of 4,500 Filipino women yearly due to these complications is more than the current number of fatalities in the H1N1 pandemic, Angeles said.

She said poor and young women are the most vulnerable with more poor women having little or no assistance from skilled health personnel. The health crisis are also the result of misinformation and lack of awareness.

The bills call for the setting up of more health centers, which will make health services more affordable and accessible.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. Validation Stickers and Plate Year Tags for 3rd and 4th Quarters of CY 2009
2. Aluminum Sheeting Materials for 3rd and 4th Quarters of CY 2009
3. Reflective Sheeting Materials for 3rd and 4th Quarters of CY 2009

Item	Description
1.	Validation Stickers and Plate Year Tags for 3rd and 4th Quarters of CY 2009
2.	Aluminum Sheeting Materials for 3rd and 4th Quarters of CY 2009
3.	Reflective Sheeting Materials for 3rd and 4th Quarters of CY 2009

Worms, ant eggs, lizards in festival

By Bea Muno-Elevo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

HOMETOWN
Snapshot

BAGUIO, BENGUET—Worms, ant eggs—lo-custs, if from cultured soil—and lizards will be the cuisines will showcase next week, at the heart of sharing pig's meat during the Tam Grand Anniversary Festival here on May 20-24.

Ammungen is a term of the Gaddang tribe similar to the Kankana-ey word ammungan, or gathering.

Because Benguet is used by ethnolinguistic groups with varied tongues, ammungan has been popularized during tribal festivals since the 1990s.

Expect other exotic dishes to be shared during the festival that on May 25. Shell bing (worms), adobong lumpia (lizard cooked in vinegar), adobong dog (snake), grilled frog (those cultivated and not eggs), and adobo or pinausang tukak (native frogs).

Originally celebrated as thanksgiving to the harvest gods, the festival features local activities and events leading to the founding anniversary of the province on May 24.

This year, organizers introduced the Grand Ammungan Festival to depict the cultural traits and resources of Nueva Vizcaya.

"Above all, it is still thanksgiving to our gods but we want to promote the unique culinary identity of Nueva Vizcaya," said Vice Gov. Jose Gambito, the festival's organizer.

"This will be a long-term project to give a unique identity to all cities in the province," he said, adding that the organizers prefer to call them Tabu Ammungan. The name refers to all Nueva Vizcayanons, including those who have lost their ethnic identity due to intermarriage.

It will now be used to classify indigenous tribes in Nueva Vizcaya, such as the Ibaloi, Ifugao, Kalinga-apayao Bontoksan, Kankanaey, Balbal, Gaddang, Ibanag, and Tuwali, Gamo-Isinai.

SPORTS

CHAMPIONS CUP

RP rips Korea but Toroman unimpressed

By Jane Navarro

INCHEON—ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, THE Smart Gilas-Philippine National Team handed nowhere near the passing mark despite an opening-day demolition job.

Smart Gilas crushed Jungsu Phoenix of South Korea, 86-70, last night, sending a strong message that the Philippines will not be a pushover in the tough field of the 2009 Fiba-Asia Champions Cup here.

RP coach Rajko Toroman, however, had a different message for his team.

"We were all right, but if you ask me, we're still a five on a scale of 10," said Toroman, whose squad will face an axial test today against defending champion Iran, which will be represented by Mahmoud Tehrani.

"It's going to be a big game and to tell you honestly, they (Iranians) are the team to beat," added the Serbian mentor who was listed as project director by the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas.

Against the Koreans, 12 Gilas men a close picture of dominance in the paint as the 6-foot-11 Asaminew inspired nevertheless blanked them and stuffed the number in the hoop at every opportunity, delighting the crowd at the Munhak Arena inside the Incheon Guiling Sport Mall.

Andy Mark Barroca was again on top of his game, dishing out quality minutes and producing a game-high 20 points on top of five steals, three rebounds and two assists.

Mac Belangel, Chris Tiu and Jeff Chan also made strong impressions after finishing in double figures.

Yoonsun, who brought Iran to the Beijing Olympics last year, has yet to score the breakout in this tournament.

"We have a big problem scoring (too)," said Toroman. "Hopefully, we could be at our best tomorrow (today) and keep up with them."

Jun Tawan paced the Koreans with 18 points and Chung Byung-hoon added 16 after going three-of-four from beyond the arc.

In the tournament opener, former Ateneo Miguel Beer import Nam Johnson stacked with 29 points as Lebanon romanced Kuwait, 87-78.

The scores

SMART GILAS 86—Barroca 20, Allen 10, Belangel 10, Tiu 10, Ayonayon 7, Asaminew 6, Cabagnot 5, Chan 5, Yeng Guiao 3, Slaughter 1, Jawo 0, Sumalinog 0, Sangalang 0, Ilagan 0, Ildefonso 0, Cruz 0, Pascual 0, Ramos 0, Ahanmisi 0, Ebona 0, Ebona 0, Ebona

Durable Buenavista nails 2nd Open gold

LINGAYEN—EDUARDO BUENAVISTA showed he's still the king of Philippine long-distance races yesterday, ruling the men's 10,000-meter run and completing a golden double in the 3,000 Mila Nasion-al Open Track and Field Championships at the Don Mariano Marcos Sports and Civic Center here.

The 39-year-old Buenavista clocked 31 minutes and 51.38 seconds in routing his younger rivals. He also clinched the men's 5,000m gold in Sunday's inaugurals with a time of 14:07.5.

"There are many strong runners now but I can still match up with them," said the Nelson Biotechnics, who broke the RP record of 29:02.36 in the 10,000m when he ran in the 2002 Busan Asian Games.

Army bet Elmer Imbal settled for the silver, crossing the finish line in 34:00.50, with Reynaldo Villarosa of University of Baguio bagging the bronze in 34:20.15.

Bicolan accomplishment: Jerbert Delcano and Rose Hedrosa also made their presence felt, topping the men's long jump and 3000m steeple chase, respectively, as a day foreign bidders again dominated their events.

Delicano cleared 7.40m while Hedrosa romped his title with ease, clocking 9:04.98 and finishing more than 15 seconds ahead of runner-up Gerald Sabido.

Nonetheless, Buenavista, Delicano and South Korea's Min Ju-yeo were the centerpiece 100-meter duels for men and women with times of 10.83 and 12.27 seconds, respectively.

Taiwanese bets also completed their domination of the throwing events in Chang Ming-huang took the gold in men's shot put (17.72m) as the supreme of Elinor Sumang (15.79m).

Another Taiwanese, Chang Yu-in handled 1988 Games record holder Ariel Ivarra with a heave of 61.31 m to hammer throw. Ivarra could only draw 58.13m.

In the junior division, Palarong Pambansa contenders Andrew Chelgham Oliver emerged as the most bemedalled by winning his third gold in the boys' 10,000m with a time of 36:17.02.

A protégé of former national runner Jojo Bandala, the 17-year-old Ulibar also won the 3000m (13:37.01) and the 5000m steeplechase (18:46.83).

Some gold medalists were Iris Bolcan of PCSA and Jerald pride Lany Cardinoza of Cotabato/ARMM.

JAMES 27-point game

James hits 27 as Cavs sweep Hawks

ATLANTA—LEBRON JAMES SCORED 27 points and had the last word with a buckling fan at courtside as the Cleveland Cavaliers finished off the Atlanta Hawks, 84-75, Monday to win the NBA second-round series in four straight games.

Delonte West and Mo Williams showed Cleveland isn't just a one-man team, hitting huge shots down the stretch as the Cavaliers extended their NBA-record streak of double-digit playoff wins to eight in a row.

Cleveland, which also swept Detroit in the first round, will face either Boston or Orlando in the Eastern Conference finals.

No matter the opponent, the Cavaliers will be a lot more rested. The Celtics-Magic series, tied 2-2, will last at least through Thursday.

After scoring 49 points in Game 3, James struggled with his jumper in this one. Still, he came through with the Cavaliers facing their first serious challenge of the playoffs.

With the Cavaliers ahead by just four, 80-62, James hit a towering 3-pointer with 4:38 remaining to go. Lingering at the arc to pose with his right hand extended, it sowed the series seal.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 13 of his 44 points in the fourth quarter, including a high-arching shot with 3.09 left that put Dallas ahead for good on their way to a 119-117 victory. Jerry Stackhouse missed the series-to-a fifth game with a sprained right knee, 3-1.

Carmelo Anthony scored a career playoff-best 41 points and hit a 3-pointer with 3.1 seconds left that sent nearly the entire sold-out arena into a frenzy, but Denver's Chauncey Billups answered with a 3-pointer from the top of the key at the buzzer to give the Nuggets a 109-107 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers in Game 3 of their Western Conference semifinal series.

Billups' shot came after Anthony's 3-pointer gave the Trail Blazers a 107-106 lead with 5.1 seconds left. Denver will host Game 4 on Wednesday.

Chris Bosh had 25 points and 12 rebounds for his first career playoff double-double, and Toronto beat Philadelphia, 104-96, to even the Eastern Conference semifinal series at 2-2.

Andrea Bargnani had 20 points and Jason Kapono added 19 for the Raptors, who won their second straight after losing the first two games at home.

Andre Iguodala had 24 points for the 76ers, who will host Game 5 on Thursday.

Rasheed Wallace had 20 points and 10 rebounds, Rajon Rondo had 19 points and 10 assists and Paul Pierce added 18 points for Boston, which beat Orlando, 103-96, to take a 3-2 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinal series.

Game 6 will be in Orlando on Friday.

Dwight Howard had 20 points and 15 rebounds for the Magic, who have lost two straight after winning the first three games of the series.

Kevin Garnett had 19 points and 11 rebounds for Boston, which won its second straight after losing the first two games at home.

Ray Allen had 18 points for the Celtics, who will host Game 6 on Friday.

Carrera tops stage; Santy stays at helm

THE MAIN pack gets a refreshing welcome from a Tour fan in Luna, La Union.

By Marc Anthony Reyes

VIGAN, ILOCOS SUR—SHERWIN CARRERA MAY HAVE LIVED UP TO HIS name, but Tour leader Santy Barnachea couldn't be toppled from his perch.

Carrera, a tall and muscular 23-year-old from San Fabian, Pangasinan, zoomed ahead early in the race and went on to claim Stage 5 honors of the 2009 Pedyak Pinoy Tour of Champions that started in San Fernando, La Union, and ended here yesterday.

But Air21-08 skipper Barnachea still he wearing the yellow jersey for the fourth straight day today after toughing it out against each challengers that included his powerhouse mates.

"This is the start of my Calvary" said the 2006 champion from Antipolo who took the overall lead after Stage 2, on Saturday in Apalit, Pampanga.

The 164.8-kilometer journey featured many road works and rough terrain that tested scores of cyclo and the rivals.

The 3-foot 11 Carrera—who stand 25 centimeters off his rivals—rode tenacious, though, and attributed his second Tour stage win in three years to a recent stint in Malaysia's Tour of Selangka.

A chase pair of Rovina and Interbank Wiel's Cris Joven cut the lead of Carrera's four-man breakaway pack to 1 km as they reached Santiago, Ilocos Sur.

But Carrera's teammates then collected themselves and the rest of the big pack caught up with Rovina and Joven entering Candon City before the pair could indulge in gap with Carrera's group.

The group then splintered in Santa, Ilocos Sur, 15 km to the finish, as it negotiated a rush pack marked by dippings.

The riders ended the 13th Tour Stage 6 today via Luna City.

Nine NSA 'factions' file complaint with IOC

By Francis TJ. Dehesa

THE INTERNAL STRIFE WRACKING National Sports Association (NSA) of the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) has now reached the point of no return—and out of the country as well.

Nine NSA "factions" struggling to resolve leadership problems filed a complaint with the International Olympic Committee accusing POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco of violating the Olympic Charter and of abusing the POC's discretion to arbitrate NSA disputes.

In a statement distributed during the PSA Forum at Shakey's UN Avenue branch, Cojuangco branded the nine-pleat "deceptive."

The complaint, dated May 11, 2009, was contained in a letter sent to IOC president Jacques Rogge in Lausanne, Switzerland. It appealed for an immediate and redress under the rules and regulations of the Olympic Movement.

Among those who signed the complaint were Aurelio M. Ramos of badminton; Cornea O. Cuenilla of equestrian; Marcia Cano-Leal of dragon boat racing; Jane Ong of swimming; Alberto Pimentel of aquatics; Abraham Tolentino of cycling; Vic Maladecena of billiards; Renato B. Bartolome of archery and Jesse F. Lacuata of wrestling.

Of the nine, only Cuenilla's dragon boat racing is not recognized as an NSA.

Swimming, archery, tennis and wrestling are currently undergoing leadership battles. Badminton recently held an POC-sanctioned election that cancelled names as prominent Tolentino and Maladecena did not show up for the POC-monitored election while Cuenilla was installed president of equestrian in polls that did not get POC recognition.

POC president Cojuangco (third from left) discusses the Olympic body's take on NSA disputes in yesterday's PSA Forum at Shakey's UN Avenue. With him are (from left) Land star Gandy Valle, archery's Lauren Bruzon, Hilton Cojuangco-Jaworski, "Boss" Reyes and "Django" Buenaventura.

Peping may tap LGUs if PSC withholds aid

By Cedelf P. Tupas

PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMmittee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco promised yesterday that the possibility of tapping local government units to support athletes racing action in the Southeast Asian Games in Laos.

"If things get worse, (funding from government), we can (draw). Iyall for athletes who are going to have to go with (private) (they cannot from," Cojuangco said at the PSA Forum at Shakey's UN Avenue in Manila. "Then the LGUs can probably help those athletes."

Pangasinan Gov. Amado Espino and Dagupan Mayor Al Fernandez have expressed desire to support their own athletes in the sectional pool.

Cojuangco said the POC cannot make budgetary constraints a excuse not to perform well in the SEA Games in December.

"It's up to us to solve our situation," added Cojuangco, who was joined at the forum sponsored by Shakey's, Pepsi, Accel and Gatorade by daughter and 2002 Busan Asian Games gold medalist Hilton Cojuangco-Jaworski, Mark Joseph of swimming, Julius Caesar of tennis, Lenoren Bruzon of archery, Marcia Cano-Leal of dragon boat racing, Jane Ong of swimming, Alberto Pimentel of aquatics, Abraham Tolentino of cycling, Vic Maladecena of billiards, Renato B. Bartolome of archery and Jesse F. Lacuata of wrestling.

Eagles eye 5th win vs Bulldogs

Crack foreign bidders in RP Int'l Open tenpin tilt

By Cedelf P. Tupas

THE COUNTRY'S TOP BOWLERS FACE formidable foreign challengers, including players from China to the 38th PBC-SF International Open Bowling Championships from May 20 to June 13 at Bong's Midtown Bowling Lanes in Robinson's Ermita, Manila.

Southeast Asian powerhouses Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, South Korea, Hong Kong and Indonesia are also fielding entries in the tournament, Philippine Bowling Congress president Tboy Tampus said in yesterday's PSA Forum at the Shakey's UN Avenue in Manila.

A total pot of P1.7 million will be up for grabs in the championships with the men's masters champion getting P250,000 and the women's winner P150,000.

Cuna will field a full 12-men roster, added Tampus, who was joined in the forum by PBC secretary general Song Cue, SF Open tournament committee chair Jules Rempis, scribble Francis de Leon and tournaments director Jojo Montero.

SF Open tournament director Brenda Lopena will gun for back-to-back titles in the men's division, while SF Youth standout Christine Tolosa will defend her crown in the women's category.

SPORTSWATCH

Gingoog PCSO ringfest up

THE MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL BOC-reported will see action in the PCSO Amateur bowling series in Gingoog City Mayors Trophy Cup Nov 20.

Hosted by Cdr. Boyie Moreno and Mayor Ruth de Leon Gangcuna, homegrown talents Gerchard Maestre and Cathy Bulacio will headline the tournament.

The Amateur Bowling Federation of Philippines sanctioned event is also backed by Tandaya Shoes, Alagao Beverage Dairy Inc. Resort in Misamis Oriental.

Pacquiao derby finals today

THE CHAMPIONS OF THE PACMAN 2009 Big Hand 7-Cock Derby, a 32-entry fund-raising cockfest hosted by boxing hero Manny Pacquiao, will be known tonight at the Sabi Sabi Coliseum.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson's Partido ng Manny Pacquiao (PMP) Secretary/Bulacan 3, Barry "Boy" Espino (LP, Pampanga), Atong Castro (PCSO), Reps. Antonio Calixto (PMP/1), Teddy Casiño (Partylist), Gov. Roy Villafuerte (Camarines Sur), Mayor Alfredo Lim (Manila) and Isidro Ponce Pineda (Pampanga Partylist) lead the field with 3 wins each.

By Top Choice
Jo Sarona Arao Park

SMART
TANDAYA
We're helping Sports.
Abutin ang Tagumpay!

Imagine hitting a hole-in-one from the comfort of your living room.

Take your place among
Life's Great Masters at

8

EIGHT FORBES TOWN ROAD
Golf View Residences

With breathtaking views of the Manila golf course, 8 Forbes Town Road lets you enjoy a front seat to luxury. Here, the green is so close that you can't help but be part of the action. And like the scenery, the lifestyle you call your own is reserved for a favored few. Come home to a lavish suite with your choice of one to three bedrooms. And discover on your doorstep a multitude of privileges. There's a wide range of amenities at the seventh-level play deck. A chic retail arcade at the podium. And an array of leisure offerings at nearby Forbes Town Road. Even the nation's best destinations are at your command with your central location at the Global City, minutes away from the Makati CBD.

Master the fine art of living at the top.
At 8 Forbes Town Road.

A joint venture of
BONIFACIO WEST
and
MEGAWORLD CORPORATION

For sale at the Forbes Town Center (Showroom), 2nd floor across Road Area
Entrance Park West Drive(s), Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila

Tels: 815-1888 • 816-2768 • 816-3517

Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo R. Rivera

Singer Nina sues ex-boyfriend's parents for estafa

NINA

By Julie M. Aurelio

SINGER NINA HAS SUED the parents of her former boyfriend, fellow singer Ryan Yabarro, for swindling her of a P150,000 loan.

In a four-page complaint dated May 8 which she filed at the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office, Nina (Marilet Nolasco Cruz) in and the

SHOWBIZ A29

Woman driving alone shot dead in Pasig City

By Jaime Laude

A 40-YEAR-OLD WOMAN DRIVing a sport utility vehicle was shot in cold blood by a motorcycle-riding gunman at a busy intersection in Pasig City yesterday morning.

Gloria Liwanag, a resident of Pasig Millionaires Garden on Jewelry Avenue, died at the Medical City where she was rushed after the assailant shot her three times as she was driving her white BAF-4 (plate number XPE 377) on Julia Vargas Avenue, a police investigator disclosed.

Alex Reposos, a cigarette vendor, said he saw the victim's vehicle slam into the center island as a man ran away from the vehicle and jumped on a motorcycle, heading for C-5 Road.

Rescuers from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Barangay Ugong Rescue and Pasig police assisted the window of Liwanag's vehicle and walked her to the hospital, Chief Insp. Ciprianno Calanda of the Pasig Police Station said.

Eastern Police District Director, Chief Supt. Leo Odiamen, said the motive for the killing was still under investigation, and that the suspect has not been identified.

"The investigators have not yet talked to the victim's family as we still don't know what could be the motive. Once we've talked to the family, we'll see what could be the possible motive," he told the reporters by phone.

Attending physician Dr. Paulo Mesa said Liwanag sustained three gunshot wounds on the left side of her body.

Assisted by Chief Insp. Marlyn Lopez found there: All caliber bullet shells at the crime scene

Gov't curator: Japanese 'bone mission' legit

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A MUSEUM curator in the provincial capital of Tarlac has confirmed that a Japanese who was arrested at a police checkpoint last month was on a legitimate mission to retrieve the remains of Japanese Imperial Army troops in the Philippines and return them to his country.

Cecilio Salcedo, curator II of the National Museum's Cultural Properties Division, told the Inquirer Post Tarlac bureau in the land for Luzon of Bataan, a nonprofit and nongovernment organization which has been involved in the recovery of bodies of Japanese soldiers.

Tomita, 61, was apprehended at around 3:30 p.m. on April 23 at the entrance of Dalo Barrio Street and Romulo Drive in Tarlac by operatives of the Manila Police District's Mobile Patrol Unit who were manning a checkpoint.

Found inside his Mitsubishi Pajero were several skeletal remains which were wrapped in pieces of white cloth.

Salcedo told the Inquirer that since the 1970s, the Japanese Embassy has been coordinating with them for the recovery of the remains of Japanese Imperial Army heroes killed in the Philippines during World War II.

"Every year, they search for the bodies of Japanese soldiers in the country. It is something religious to them, (about the bones) are connected to (to the soul)," he explained.

The curator was readily supported by a Manila-based Japanese representative who documents the entire mission and ensures that there is a permit for the excavation as well as the removal of bodies.

Mr. Tomita did all this alone. Even the chief of mission of the Japanese Embassy delegated his duties. Maybe he was times in by the performance of the Red that he overlooked the proper procedure," Salcedo remarked, adding that apart from securing permits from the National Museum, Tomita should have also gotten a clearance from the Department of Health to move the bodies.

Salcedo, however, said that Tomita, who remains in the custody of the provincial prosecutor's office, apologized for failing to coordinate with the National Museum.

Chief Supt. Rodolfo Magtibay, MPD officer in charge, said that Tomita told them yesterday that the bones were found in caves in Mounting Orotaled Mariveles.

UNHEALTHY LOAD
Members of the Quezon City government's Task Force "Bantay" seize boxes out of "double dead" meat, also known as "bentra," from several stalls in the Balintawak public market. Two vendors believed to be selling the tainted meat were also arrested. MIKE ALQUINTO

1,000 families living in military-owned land in Western Bicutan face eviction

By Nina Catherine Calleja

AT LEAST 1,000 FAMILIES living in four sites in Western Bicutan, Taguig City, have been told to leave their houses which, according to the military, are built on government property.

In a memorandum from the Philippine Army's Task Group Bantay dated May 7, the residents of Mangyan, Mangyan and parts of Kinlaparan and Sumaran were told to voluntarily demolish their "illegally constructed structures" within three days. The memorandum was signed by Lt. Col. Ariel Bacgalo, task group commander.

On Tuesday, the deadline set by Bacgalo, around 20 soldiers arrived in Sitio Mangyang to enforce the memorandum. They were in full battle gear and armed with long firearms, truncheons and shields.

A fight broke out between them and the residents, with both sides sustaining minor injuries.

The soldiers later left although they told the residents that they will return to enforce the memorandum.

Wilma Saporido, secretary general of Magkakaisang Bisig ng Mga Mamayang Inc., said that around 1,000 families who will be affected by the eviction order have nowhere to go.

She added that they will not leave the area until the soldiers can show them a court order.

In 2006, the Commission on the Settlement of Land Problems (ComLap) issued a resolution, saying the area in question had been declared "alienable and disposable" by Presidential Proclamation 2476 which was issued by then President Ferdinand Marcos.

Last month, the Court of Appeals reversed and set aside the ComLap resolution based on a motion filed by the Department of National Defense, which is claiming ownership of the area.

Carly Ida, Taguig City government information officer, said that since the land is owned by the DND, the department should be responsible for the residents' relocation.

DID YOU KNOW

MERALCO 200,000 new subscribers registered in Metro Manila in 2010. This overpriced 10 percent of the nearly 860,000 new subscribers registered nationwide that year.

Orly L. Barcelona, Inquirer Research

METROBRIEFS

2 oil firms make an appeal

TWO OF THE COUNTRY'S biggest oil firms yesterday asked a Manila court to reverse its previous ruling ordering them to open their books for auditing. In their separate motions for reconsideration, Chevron and Petron Corp. said the court's order was tainted with factual or legal lapses. In a April 27 order, Judge Silvino Pampilo of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 20 asked the Commission on Audit, Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs to open and examine the books of Pilipinas Shell, Petron and Chevron from January to December 2003. Petron and Chevron, however, contended that the ruling the court erred in its ruling that declaratory relief is a proper remedy to determine whether the provisions of laws violated Article 1 Sec 10 the Revised Penal Code and Section 151 of the oil deregulation law's Republic Act No. 8479.

Tina B. Jiandani

'Bentra' vendors nabbed in QC

TWO ADMORS were nabbed before dawn yesterday in Balintawak, Quezon City, after police officers seized three tons of "double dead" meat or "bentra" from them. The city's Task Force Bantay, composed of the Quezon City Police District, the city's health department and market administration office, conducted the operation to go after vendors of contaminated meat. Two vendors, Pedro Cayetano and Juanito Trinidad, were arrested for allegedly selling the double-dead meat.

Jade M. Auralo

Car theft suspect tags cop

POLICE last week arrested a man suspected of being a member of a car theft gang allegedly led by a police officer assigned to the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Quezon) area. The suspect gave the name of a commissioned officer as the financier of their group," Senior Insp. Enrico Figueroa, chief of the theft and robbery section of the Quezon City Police District, said. The suspect, Antonio Ilonada, 41, was charged with illegal possession of firearms.

Nancy C. Carvajal and Erlie Quiroga

'Richard not portrayed as troublemaker in site'

By Allison W. Lagos

THE HEADS OF CHIEF OF ABS entertainment website yesterday insisted that actor Richard Gutierrez was not portrayed as a "troublemaker" in an article which had reported his alleged involvement in a gun-toting incident.

PhilSpirit Entertainment Portal editor in chief Avery Alaghiyan, who was charged by the actor with libel, said in her counter-affidavit that the March 29 story "did not impute any discreditable act or condition to any person, much less to the complainant."

Gutierrez had sued Alaghiyan, PEP managing editor Karen Segovia-Igot and staff writer Ferdinand "Boog" Dalisay for P20 million for the article that claimed he was involved in a fight with actor Michael Flores.

Based on the PEP article, Gutierrez and Flores reportedly fought briefly at the parking lot of Ocean Restaurant in Pasay City, when director Mark Reyes was celebrating his birthday.

In his complaint, the lead star of "Dyesebel" denied being involved in a so-called "brawl or gunrama," "squabble," "gun-toting incident," or "brawl" with Flores or anyone for that matter.

Alaghiyan, however, said the terms "cannot be taken out of context" and need not be interpreted as accusing a person of being a troublemaker.

NBI raid of porn site base upheld by court

By Norman Bordadora

THE COURT OF APPEALS (CA) upheld the validity of the search warrant used by the National Bureau of Investigation to raid a pornographic website's base of operations in a posh subdivision in southern Metro Manila.

The court's Second Division in a decision promulgated March 30 but only released last April 29, upheld the Regional Trial Court's issuance of a warrant to search for Hubert's house in Ayala Alabang for equipment being used by the website.

Victor Isaac, in court records, was the operator of www.hubertsmo.com. In his petition, he argued that the NBI didn't have sufficient basis to apply for the search warrant.

The website was the subject of an appeal by Jose Lorenzo Lagunda, who argued that Hubert is dead if it does fix featuring pornographic videos and photos of nude Filipino women.

Singer Nina sues ex-boyfriend's parents

From page A13

charged Evangelina and Oliver Valiente with estafa.

On top of this, Oliver was accused of violating Batas Pambansa Blang 22 in the Bacoor, Cavite, court.

Nina, a resident of Barangay Poblacion in Quezon City, said she came to know the Valientes through their son, Oliver, her former boyfriend.

She added that in 2007, the couple borrowed P1.4 million from her. The following year, Oliver issued several checks as payment for their debt. Some of the checks, however, bounced, she said.

Nina further said that in July 2008, she entered into a compromise agreement with the couple to the which Evangelina immediately paid her P500,000 in cash.

The couple also agreed to settle the balance of P1.4 million in monthly installments—from Aug. 20, 2008 to Feb. 20, 2010, she added. They later gave her 19 postdated checks which were signed by Oliver.

Nina said that although she was able to cash some of the checks, some—which totaled P900,000—were not honored due to insufficient funds.

"Finally, (despite Nina's, by means of deceit and acting in conspiracy, induced me to sign the compromise agreement when in fact they do not (intend) to (collect)... (a couple) with the name and consent of (the spouse)," she added.

When contacted by the Inquirer, Oliver said that his lawyer had advised him not to comment on the matter at this time.

Iran frees American journalist

TEHRAN—AP—AMERICAN journalist imprisoned on espionage charges in Iran for four months was freed on Monday and reunited with her toddler, tearful parents, who prepared to return home with her to the US in the coming days.

The release of Roxana Saberi drew a major rebuke to President Barack Obama's attempts at reconciliation with the top US adversary in the Middle East. Washington had called the charges against the 31-year-old dual Iranian-American citizen baseless and repeatedly demanded her release.

Hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad could also win some domestic political points a month before his then a reelection challenge from reformers who seek to ease Iran's bitter rivalry with the United States.

Saberi's mother-in-law Setareh Bazzaz Saberi, wiped away tears, then flashed a broad smile as he and his wife, Akiko, arrived at Saberi's Evin prison—notorious for holding political prisoners—to meet their daughter. Akiko Saberi, who is of Japanese origin, wore a flowered head scarf.

"I'm very happy that she is free. Roxana is in good condition," Reza Saberi said later in his family home in Tehran. "We had expected her release but not so soon. She will be preparing to leave. Dural tomorrow or the day after tomorrow."

The youngest Saberi, who was taken out of Evin through a back door away from journalists, was not seen after her release. She was staying with her parents at a friend's home, apparently to avoid publicity before leaving Iran.

Her release came when an appeals court reduced her eight-year prison sentence on charges of spying for the US to a two-year suspended sentence, said Iranian judiciary spokesperson Ali Reza Jamshidi. He said Saberi was free to leave Iran. AP

Pakistan army closes in on Taliban base

SWAT VALLEY—SOLDIERS closed in on Tuesday on a Taliban headquarters in Swat, the military said, as the United Nations rushed for help for hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the fighting.

The offensive in Swat, 100 km northwest of Islamabad, is seen as a test of the government's commitment to fire up a growing Taliban insurgency and comes after the United States accused it of "vacillating" to the militants.

The fighting has caused a civilian exodus from the valley, creating a crisis destination, setting fears of a humanitarian crisis.

At least 200,000 people have left their homes to reunite their and in all about 300,000 are expected to flee. They join about 600,000 people displaced earlier from Swat and other areas because of fighting since August.

Helicopters flew soldiers near the remote Shorbar valley, where the Taliban have a headquarters, a military spokesperson said in a statement.

Residents said troops had also been seen moving on the ground toward Peochar, a side valley running northwest off the main Swat valley.

"It looks as if there will be a big assault as we see many buildings burning," said villager Hamida Bibi.

The offensive was launched last week when President Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, was in Washington securing a nervous United States his government was also losing to collapse and was committed to fighting militancy.

A February pact aimed at ending violence in Swat, that effectively handed the militants control, had raised fears of a gradual Taliban takeover of more areas in the nuclear-armed country, which is vital to the efforts to defeat al-Qaida and stabilize Afghanistan.

Interior Ministry chief Rehman Malik said on Monday 700 Taliban and 28 soldiers had been killed.

Most reporters have left Swat and there was no independent confirmation of that or claims of militant casualties which was higher than figures provided by the military.

Residents and another military official said there had also been clashes in Imam Deri, the home town of the Taliban chief in Swat, Fazlullah. Five militants were killed, the official said.

Most political parties and many members of the public support the offensive but fear could change if civilians displaced in what the government say is the country's largest ever internal migration are seen to be suffering or if many are killed.

The United Nations has warned of a protracted humanitarian crisis for a country already being propped up by a $7.6-billion International Monetary Fund loan.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres called on international support for the humanitarian effort.

"This is a huge and rapidly unfolding emergency, which is going to require considerable resources beyond those that currently exist in this region," Guterres said in a statement.

The refugee agency has opened stockpiles of supplies to help the displaced and is scrambling to raise of additional emergency supplies.

Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani told the National Assembly on Monday that the government would soon organize a conference of aid donors to marshal funds.

Stock market investors have been unnerved by the fighting and political tension in the commercial hub of Karachi.

Separately, suspected US drones unleash four missiles in a Pakistani region on the Afghan border, killing at least eight people, military and intelligence officials said.

The attack took place in a mountainous region of South Waziristan, a known Al-Qaida and Taliban hotbed, the officials said. Reuters

Suspected Nazi guard deported

CLEVELAND—DEPORTED BY the United States, retired autoworker John Demjanjuk was carried in a wheelchair onto a jet that departed on Monday evening for Germany, which wants to try him as an accessory to the murders of Jews and others at a Nazi death camp in World War II.

Demjanjuk, 89, arrived in an ambulance at Cleveland Hopkins Lakefront Airport after spending several hours with US immigration officials at a downtown federal building. Airport commissioner Khalid Bakhtar confirmed Demjanjuk was on the plane and that its destination is Germany.

The deportation came nine days after the US Supreme Court refused to consider Demjanjuk's requests to block deportation and about three and a half years after he was last ordered deported.

The Ukrainian-born Demjanjuk is wanted on a Munich indictment that accuses him of 29,060 counts of accessory to murder as a guard at the Sobibor death camp in Nazi-occupied Poland. The legal case spans three decades.

A German Justice Ministry spokesperson, Ulrich Steudtl, said the retired autoworker was expected to be in Germany by Tuesday.

Demjanjuk denies Germany's accusations, saying he was held by the Germans as a Soviet prisoner of war and was never a camp guard. Demjanjuk's family fought deportation, arguing he is in poor health and might not survive the lengthy legal process.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, a founder of the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, said Demjanjuk deserves to be punished and that this will probably be the last trial of someone accused of Nazi war crimes.

"His work at the Sobibor death camp was to push men, women and children into the gas chambers," Hier said in a statement. "He had no mercy, no pity and no remorse for the families whose lives he was destroying."

The center was established to locate and help bring to justice Nazi war criminals.

The deportation capped a day in which Demjanjuk said goodbye to his family and was visited by two priests at his home in Cleveland suburb.

He then slipped quietly into an ambulance parked in his driveway his family members standing at the edge of the garage and holding up a flag-patterned bedsheet to block the view of reporters and photographers across the street.

Earlier Monday his son, John Demjanjuk Jr., told an appeal in a US court would go ahead even if his father isn't in the country.

"Given the history of Mr. Iran and not a shred of evidence that he ever hurt any person let alone murdered anyone anywhere, this is inhuman even if the courts have said it is lawful," Demjanjuk Jr said. AP

TENS of thousands visit the quake-devastated town of Beichuan, southwestern China's Sichuan province, on May 12. State readers laid flowers and survivors burned paper money for departed spirits. -

China marks 1st anniversary of devastating earthquake

BEICHUAN—STATE LEADERS and farmers and survivors burned paper money for departed spirits as a memorial in China marked the first anniversary on Tuesday of a devastating earthquake that left nearly 90,000 people dead or missing and five million homeless.

Mourning a memorial service before a destroyed school in the Sichuan province town of Yingxiu, President Hu Jintao pledged unconditional support for rebuilding and disaster prevention and efforts toward a "more harmonious relationship between man and nature."

Addressing a memorial service before a destroyed school in the Sichuan province town of Yingxiu, President Hu Jintao pledged unconditional support for rebuilding and disaster prevention and efforts toward a "more harmonious relationship between man and nature."

"The great task of earthquake rescue and recovery entails us again that unity is strength, that victory can only be gained through struggle," said Hu, before leading military and civilian leaders, diplomats, students and emergency services workers in laying carnations before a stone memorial.

The 35-minute ceremony followed a minute of silence beginning at 2:28 p.m. the moment the magnitude-7.9 quake—the deadliest earthquake to hit China in decades—struck on May 12, 2008, toppling or burying villages, snapping bridges and razing large portions of Sichuan and two neighboring provinces.

The solemn event was broadcast live on national television, underscoring the disaster's enduring effect on the national consciousness.

At the nearby county seat of Beichuan, mourners gathered at a destroyed middle school where about 1,800 students and faculty were killed, pilling flowers and burning candles and sticks of incense amid the smoke and rumble of neighboring firecrackers. Many brought pictures of their dead children and pasted notes to a metal fence surrounding the rubble, including one reading "peace to the dead, strength to the living."

The quake cast a shadow over the Beijing Summer Olympics that followed in August, and while Chinese media have continued to report on developments in the quake zones, new concerns have since begun to compete for attention. AP

Pope seeks reconciliation at Jerusalem holy site

JERUSALEM—POPE BENEDICT XVI took his message of peace to the most contentious site in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on Tuesday, urging both sides to engage in "a sincere dialogue aimed at building a world of justice and peace."

On the second day of his Holy Land tour, the Pope visited the Dome of the Rock, where Muslims believe the Prophet Mohammad ascended to heaven, and the adjacent Western Wall, the last remnant of the ancient Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.

Competing claims to the hilltop compound—revered by Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and Jews as the Temple Mount—have sparked violence in the past. Resolving the dispute has been the most insurmountable issue during more than 15 years of on-and-off Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

"In a world sadly torn by divisions, this sacred place serves as a reminder, and also challenges men and women of goodwill, to work to overcome misunderstandings and conflicts of the past and set out on the path of a sincere dialogue aimed at building a world of justice and peace for coming generations," the Pope said during a meeting with the top Islamic cleric in Jerusalem, Mohammed Hussein.

Before meeting with Hussein, Benedict visited the mosque on the Dome of the Rock, the most sacred Muslim shrine in Jerusalem and part of the compound that it shares third-holiest site. He removed his red shoes before entering as a sign of respect, and a priest helped him slip them back on as he left.

Following tradition, Benedict inserted a note between the ancient stones of the Western Wall, the last remnant of the second of two biblical temples and Judaism's holiest shrine. The written blessing asked "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" to "turn the eye of the afflicted, the fearful, the bereft; send your peace upon this Holy Land, upon the Middle East, upon the entire human family."

As one point, Palestinian activists released rare groups of red, green and black balloons over the Old City, representing the colors of the Palestinian flag. One cluster held a Palestinian flag, the other the yellow and white Vatican flag. The Pope was inside meeting the clerics and did not see the colorful display. AP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Queen

US sacks top commander in Afghanistan

MCKIERNAN

WASHINGTON —US Defense Secretary Robert Gates has sacked the top commander in Afghanistan in order to pave the way for "new thinking" in the 7-year-old war that has struggled to halt a widening Taliban insurgency.

Gates, explaining on Monday his decision to replace Gen. David McKiernan after less than a year on the job as the US and NATO commander, said: "That mission there requires new thinking and new approaches from our military leaders."

He said he had tapped Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, a former commander of special operations forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, to replace McKiernan.

"Today, we have a new policy set by our new president. We have a new strategy, a new mission and a new ambassador," Gates told a news conference. "I believe that new military leadership also is needed."

The change comes as President Barack Obama escalates the war against a spreading Taliban insurgency, approving deployments that will double the size of the US force in Afghanistan before he took office in January to 68,000 by the fall.

"The new commander will inherit growing instability in neighboring Pakistan and a public outcry against Afghans over rising civilian casualties from US air strikes. AFP

UN action urged on Sri Lanka

UNITED NATIONS—THE BRITISH, FRENCH AND Austrian foreign ministers urged the UN Security Council on Monday to take action to prevent more killings of civilians in Sri Lanka's northern war zone.

"We are waiting, all of us, to the end of the bombing, to the end of any life—not only suffering, but any life in this siege pocket?" asked French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner.

Sri Lanka is not on the council's agenda because Russia and China, both veto-wielding permanent members, along with Japan and Vietnam, consider the war between the government and the Tamil Tigers an internal matter—not a threat to international peace and security.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed deep concern on Monday "over any events when civilians are suffering" but gave no indication that Moscow would change its position.

Mexican and antiwar groups from eight council nations—including the United States but not Russia or China—met on the sidelines of a Security Council meeting on the Middle East with UN humanitarian officials and representatives of nongovernmental organizations to discuss the latest reports from the war zone.

A doctor in the war zone said as many as 1,000 civilians may have been killed in two days of shelling that marked some of the most violence in the Indian Ocean island nation since civil war flared up again more than three years ago.

The Sri Lankan government, which is dominated by the island nation's Sinhalese majority, has pledged to end the rebellion by the Tamil Tigers once and for all. The Tigers, considered a terrorist group by the government and the US, have been fighting for a separate state for the ethnic Tamils, who live mainly in the north and east of the island, since 1982. More than 70,000 people have died in the conflict.

Britain Foreign Secretary David Miliband, noting the UN characterization of the shelling as a "bloodbath," said "our message is a simple one which is that the killing must stop."

Miliband, who recently visited Sri Lanka with Brockmann, said he spoke to Sri Lanka's foreign minister on Monday inviting and needed to speak to him again later in the day "because co-ops can be in any doubt that this is an issue that deserves the international community's attention."

He said between 50,000 and 100,000 people, according to estimates from different groups, are crammed into an area of three square kilometers—small, as their New York's Central Park—and are being prevented from leaving by the Tamil Tigers trapped in the area.

Kouchner said he was ready to talk to other members of the Security Council about parting Sri Lanka on the agenda, "and to tell them what we have seen, and how an outlet for doing nothing." AP

TAMILS protest in front of the White House in Washington, D.C., on May 11. Some 150 protesting Tamils converged on the White House to condemn civilian deaths in northern Sri Lanka. AFP

49 patients killed in hospital attack

COLOMBO—A MORTAR SHELL struck the only functioning medical facility in Sri Lanka's northeast war zone on Tuesday morning, killing 49 patients and bystanders and wounding more than 50 others, a government health official said. It was the second time this month that the facility was hit.

The attack came after a weekend of heavy shelling that killed hundreds of civilians trapped in the war zone. The military has denied accusations that it was still shelling the tiny coastal strip under rebel control, which is packed with an estimated 50,000 civilians.

Thurairaja Varatharajah, the top government health official in the war zone, said a single mortar shell hit the administration ward in the makeshift hospital on Tuesday morning, in addition to the 49 killed, scores of others were wounded, and he expected the death toll to rise, he said.

Shelling was still hitting the area hours later, including one that landed about 150 meters from the hospital, Varatharajah said.

A second hospital official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said a hospital administrator was among those killed.

It was the second time this month that the facility had come under heavy fire. On May 2, 64 civilians died when the hospital was hit by artillery.

Reports of the fighting are difficult to verify because the government bars journalists and aid workers from the war zone.

Rebel spokesperson Annaimaan Palneedan blamed the attack on the government, and said civilians were fleeing in all directions inside the tiny war zone, seeking safety.

"There's no place to seek shelter in or prevent themselves," he said.

He called on the international community to force the government to stop its offensive against the rebels' separatist group, which has been fighting for a homeland for the ethnic Tamil minority for more than a quarter century.

"We are really afraid that if the Sri Lankan government is not being pressured to stop the carnage, that many more civilians will die in the hundreds," he said.

Sri Lankan defense spokesperson Keheliya Rambukwella denied the army had launched the attack. He said government forces had not launched any air strikes or artillery into the area. AP

IN THIS ISSUE
- Gov't eyes $500-M loan from ADB /B4
- 5-yr T-bond rate down to 6.178% /B5

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Nuriana

BUSINESS

Exports still falling, down 31% in March

Gov't notes declining rate of contraction

By Nonnel W. Domingo

PHILIPPINE EXPORTS CONTRACTED FOR A SIXTH STRAIGHT month in March, reflecting the impact of the economic recession in the United States and Europe, the country's main trade partners.

However, the contraction in the country's exports slowed down in March to 30.9 percent, sending at $2.9 billion from $4.2 billion in the same month last year.

This compares with the deeper monthly export declines, which started at 40.0 percent year-on-year in December.

The slower rate heightens an 8-month contraction leads as the National Statistics Office said in its latest report on merchandise exports that the value in March increased 13.9 percent from $2.55 billion in February.

This ended five month-on-month declines that started in October when exports plunged 30.6 percent from the previous month's earnings.

For the first quarter of 2009, cumulative export earnings fell 30.9 percent to $7.92 billion from $11.54 billion a year ago.

In trade data, electronic products—which accounted for 55.8 percent of total outbound cargoes—fell 33.9 percent year-on-year to $1.62 billion mainly due to the decrease in shipments of components and devices.

Categorized as February receipts, electronics improved 19.9 percent from $1.35 billion.

Receipts from the country's second top export—articles of apparel and clothing accessories—represented 4.6 percent of total shipments and slid 19.2 percent year-on-year to $134.81 million.

Woodcrafts and furniture, which were third with 3 percent of total exports, shrank

MONEY, B4

The Mitsubishi Lancer EX is one car that does not make you choose between substance and style. Beneath those sleek good looks lies a spacious cabin with room for five adult plus room to spare. Up front the tight curve of the dashboard creates a sense of space, while at the back the huge boot with 40/40 split folding rear seat backrests provide all the carrying capacity and flexible loadspace you need for you and your family.
Visit your nearest Mitsubishi Motors dealer and schedule a test drive today.

Standard features for Mitsubishi Lancer EX GLX & GLS

Starting at ₱890,000 or ₱10,312* monthly for the Lancer EX GLX

*36 months w/ 50% down payment

Also available: Mitsubishi Lancer EX GT 5 Speed MT

We're everywhere to serve you!

MITSUBISHI MOTORS Drivetosmile

LBC HAPE MO PADALA!
www.lbcexpress.com

Basta LBC, MAKAKARATING!
24 hr Door-to-door delivery nationwide.
LBC Hotline: 8585-999

Butt slap begets wrist slap

BIZ BUZZ
By the staff

FIRST, THE HAPPY ENDING: This female banker—a victim of sexual harassment at her former workplace—has found refuge in the arms of another bank, despite earlier fears that the rumors of the perpetrator at her former company would deter other financial institutions from hiring her.

(The other "happy ending" is that the alleged banker-pepperoner still has his job.)

Lucky girl, because her new employer reportedly patted away with one of its financial whiz kids who, if you believe the oft-reported (and denied) rumor, allegedly lost a ton of money belonging to a certain gentlemen in the subprime crisis.

And despite snoring from a prestigious stone law office to one on the edge of the Makati CBD, this female banker's skills will still be put to good use, given the seedy events of transactions that her new financial institution has under its one-man deal dynamo.

The story preceding this supposed happy ending, of course, is that she was left with little choice but to resign after the company gave her harasser what amounted to a slap on the wrist for a drunken advance last year.

Complicating the situation for the savvy bank is the fact that the offender is their top salesmaker and is on track to break a well-known glass ceiling. For a while, the offender and the female banker tried to work on a modus vivendi that eventually deteriorated into an "unworkable" situation.

According to one reliable account, the female banker sought an audience at the company's Mount Olympus for the "gods" to mandate her to another unit or assign her resignation. They reportedly replied, "When will you resign?" —Dexter L. Cano

Stalling BMW

IF ONE NEEDS to have a snazzy BMW repaired, the logical thing to do is to go directly to the official dealer and not to the friendly neighborhood *sidyar*. But for Mr. Oswald Philippines managing director Rafael "Pepong" Bañlat, taking his German delight to its dealer proved to be a mistake.

More than four years ago, before heading to the United States, he left his BMW at Prestige Cars for some repairs. Upon returning to Manila a few weeks later, he asked to have his car back, expecting it to be in tip-top shape again. He was told to "wait a day, which he did. To his consternation, he was told he still couldn't get his car the next day. After what seemed like an eternity, the dealer admitted that one of their technicians took the car out for a joyride—and made a total wreck of it.

BMW Philippines was, at first, reluctant to replace his car, telling him he should file an insurance claim first. The car was eventually replaced, but was registered. So insurance claim, no car registration—which means the car just sat in Rafael's garage, totally useless.

But forward to the present: A case that Bañlat filed with the Office of the Ombudsman Task Court is still awaiting resolution, with the defendant smiling and smiling like an earner-type jeepney caught in floodwaters. The once-every-three-months boondoggles have not been taking place of late, with the last one having been held so much as nine months ago.

Good thing his Microsoft-to-sword con is now a Mercedes-Benz. Abigail L. Ho

DFNN's Singaporean backdoor listing

THOUGH IT may appear that "techno prince" Raymond Garcia's Diversified Financial Network (DFNN) is giving up its prized overseas unit Pacific Gaming Investments Pte. Ltd. (PGI), a deal with Singapore's Fintech Synergy Ltd. has actually become its backdoor ticket to the main board of the Singapore Stock Exchange.

In exchange for Fintech's acquisition of a controlling stake in PGI, DFNN will get 90 percent of Fintech itself, while the old owners of the Singaporean company will be diluted to 10 percent. This deal is effectively a reverse takeover of a foreign entity by DFNN, perhaps the first by a local company in many years, maybe ever. The previous preoccupation reduction of PGI (380 million) also gave DFNN's shareholders a lot to smile about. —Boris C. Bonifacio

Mini-surprise at PSE

THE ONLY surprise during the six-hour stockholders' meeting of the demutualized Philippine Stock Exchange last November was that the broker-stockholders obtained only six instead of seven seats in the 15-member board. The only dark horse who made it to the board was fund manager Ruben Cantú Dantí, who is said to have diligently obtained proxies from some institutional investors. Meanwhile, one broker who unsuccessfully bid for the chairs was banker veteran **William Ang**. He was, however, elected by the new board as the PSE's new corporate secretary. —Boris C. Bonifacio

PSE penalties

THE PSE recently released the results of its 2008 annual regulatory examination of 69 trading participants. There were 22 penalized for certain violations of the Securities Regulation Code (SRC), 101 breaches, which was already reported from the house, but eight counts of SRC violations. A close runner-up was Golden Tower Securities and Holdings Inc., which incurred P427,000 worth of penalties for six violations. The single biggest violation, which was the **Jose B. Jacinto** P217,000, was failure to submit its annual audited financial statements on time. —Boris C. Bonifacio

Gov't eyes $500-M loan from ADB

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT PLANS to tap to the fourth quarter a $500-million loan facility from the Asian Development Bank as the Department of Finance scrambles to cover an expected increase in the budget deficit.

National Treasurer Roberto B. Tan said in an interview that the amount would be enough make up for Malacañang's revised fiscal program due to slashes targeting a deficit of P399.2 billion for 2009.

The loan figure is P322 billion higher than the previous target of P177.2 billion set in February.

"The additional fund that the ADB has made available for the Philippines is enough to address the change," Tan said.

"We do not need to tap other facilities like the P120-billion Chiang Mai facility, which is intended to address concerns related to balance of payments and foreign reserves," he added.

Tan said the $500 million from ADB would increase the government's official development assistance program to $1.6 billion this year.

"This is a concessional allocation and the terms are very attractive compared to other options available to us," the finance official said.

He explained that the new facility was a program loan that would be based on the country's economic chassis rather than on specific conditionalities.

Last month, finance ministers of the member states in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations—along with those from China, Japan and South Korea—agreed to implement the so-called Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM) by the end of this year.

The $120-billion CMIM is aimed at addressing the short-term liquidity problem to the region and supplementing existing international financial arrangements.

China, Japan and South Korea committed to contribute a total of $66 billion while the Asean members agreed to chip in for the remainder, including $3.68 billion from the Philippines.

The Philippines is allowed to borrow two and a half times its contribution or a maximum of $9.2 billion.

Stocks close lower

From page B1

shares index lost 8.46 percent or 3,448.66.

There were 40 gainers, 39 losers and 49 unchanged.

Volume totaled 1.91 billion shares worth P1.55 billion.

"It's a bout of profit taking, taking focus from the share valuations on Wall Street," said Manny Cruz of Amanet Equities Inc.

"The perception in the market is quite overbought. Most of the issues have already been nudging higher for the past weeks," he added.

Ayala Land Inc. fell 4 percent to P7.20, while Megaworld Corp. slipped 3.15 percent to 90 centavos and Filinvest Land Inc. slipped 3.33 percent to 64 centavos.

However, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. rose 2.53 percent to P2,325. —AFP

Philamlife partners with Bombo Radyo to insure more Filipinos

Philamlife recently announced its tie-up with Bombo Radyo, the number one radio network in the country, to further promote ASSITECT all over the Philippines. ASSITECT is the first micro insurance product that can be availed using SMS and mobile load as payment. All aged 2 to 65 can now be covered with P10,000 accidental insurance for 18 days by simply texting PHILAM ARD BOMBO ON <First Name/MI/Last Name/Address/Birthdate in mmddyyyy> to 8370. Bombo Radyo Phil. joins Philamlife in this campaign to insure every Filipino.

"We are pleased to partner with Bombo Radyo who shares in our commitment to insure more Filipinos. Through the assistec campaign, all Filipinos can now be insured conveniently and affordably," says Joanne Gochoco, project proponent, Philamlife's SVP and Chief Marketing Officer.

Gov't starts sale of 2 power facilities

By Amy S. Reyes

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES Management Corp. has put on the auction block the 192.5-megawatt (MW) Pulangbane and 112.5-MW Kalayaan geothermal power plants beginning yesterday.

The two generating units, which both are steam supplied by Energy Development Corp., are being sold as a package, according to PSALM

The state-run corporation is also set to hold a pre-bidding conference on June 30. Bid submission deadline for the Visayas-based geothermal facilities is slated on Aug. 12 this year.

Located in Bulacan, Negros Oriental, the Bulacan geothermal power plant consists of two power units—Pulangbane I and II—which are approximately five kilometers apart.

Pulangbane I, which was commissioned in 1983, is comprised of three 37.5-MW steam turbines for a total rated capacity of 112.5 MW.

Pulangbane II, on the other hand, consists of three modular power plants: Nasuji, Dikoy 1 and Sogongon. The 20-MW Nasuji was commissioned in 1993, while the 20-MW Dikoy 1 was commissioned in 1994. Sogongon, which consists of the 20-MW Sogongon 1 and 20-MW Sogongon 2, was commissioned in 1995.

The Pulangbane plant was previously packaged with the 345.5-MW Mindoro-Leyte power plant on Sept. 7, 2007. But since the long-term steam supply agreement to be attached to the Pulangbane plant still had to be approved by the Joint Congressional Power Commission then, the PSALM board decided to move the sale of the geothermal asset to 2008.

Situated in Sitio Bacolcol, Barangay Lim-ao, Kananga, Leyte, the Tongonan geothermal power plant consists of three 37.5-MW units that were commissioned in 1983.

First Philippine Holdings Corporation

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

Please take notice that the Annual Stockholders Meeting of First Philippine Holdings Corporation will be held on Monday, May 25, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. at the Manila Theater, Lopez Building, Ortigas Ave., Pasig City.

The Agenda of the meeting are as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Proof of Required Notice
3. Determination of Quorum
4. Approval of the Minutes of the May 19, 2008 and January 15, 2009 Stockholders Meetings
5. Reports of the Chairman & the President
6. Approval/Ratification of the December 31, 2008 Reports and the Audited Financial Statements
7. Amendments to Article I, Section 7 and Article II, Section 3 of the By-Laws providing that all proxies must be in the hands of the Secretary of the Corporation not later than ten (10) days before the time set for the meeting and that all nominations for the election of Directors by the stockholders shall be submitted in writing to the nomination and election committee at least sixty (60) days before the scheduled date of the annual stockholders' meeting
8. Delegation by the shareholders of the power/authority to amend the By-laws to the Board of Directors
9. Ratification of the Acts of the Board, of the Executive Committee and of Management
10. Election of Directors
11. Appointment of External Auditors
12. Other Matters
13. Adjournment

For the purpose of the meeting, only stockholders of record as of March 26, 2009 are entitled to attend and to vote to the said meeting.

All stockholders who will not, are unable, or do not expect to attend the meeting in person may choose to execute and send a valid proxy to our Stock Transfer Agent, Securities Transfer Services, Inc., Ground Floor, Benpres Building, Exchange Road cor. Meralco Avenue, Pasig City on or before May 15, 2009. Proxies shall be validated beginning on May 19, 2009, 9:00 a.m. at the company's office until May 20, 2009.

(SGD.) **ENRIQUE I. QUIASON**
Corporate Secretary

BSP bucks proposed bank for OFWs

By Michelle V Rene

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) expressed reservations over a proposal in the Senate to create a government-owned bank specifically meant to service overseas Filipino workers.

According to the BSP, past experiments would prove that specialized banks, compared with those that service a wider customer, were more prone to failure.

"The BSP recognizes further reflection of the proposal for creation of a bank (akin to the OFWs). A specialized bank is more exposed to risk than one that has a wider customer base," BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. said in a Senate hearing yesterday.

If a review, say that, of OFWs, economics problems, this might threaten the viability of banks catering only to (to) crowds, Espenilla explained. If a bank has diversified customers, he added, its financial performance would not be influenced by only one sector.

The BSP also said it was a supported policy to limit the running of corporate entities in the hands of the private sector and to limit the government's role only to regulation. He reiterated the opinion of some economists that the government should not be running businesses.

There are two banks being run by the government: Development Bank of the Philippines and Land Bank of the Philippines (operating of the Al-Amanah Islamic Bank is being handled by DBP). Espenilla said the government already had its hands full in running the two banks and that making it operate smoothly would be complex.

"The success of a bank does not rely solely on its capitalization but also on its governance. It is better for banks to be run by the private sector rather than by the government," Espenilla said.

The proposal to create an OFW bank was by the government is embedded in two separate bills —Senate Bill No. 95 and 947— authored by Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Manuel Villar.

Under the bills, the bank will be called the

BSP BUCKS, B1

INSTANT PLASTIC PARTS!!!
NO MINIMUM ORDER
- Prototyping / Small Scale Production
- ABS and PVC Like material
- High Temp and Clear Plastic
- Model Production from 3D CAD Files
- 2D to 3D File Conversion to STL Format
- Also Modelling for Jewelry and Metal Casting Applications

QuickBooks®
Accounting Solutions For All Business Types
SHARE THE POWER OF A SINGLE PC
₱4,950

Laser Engraver
Create 1001
• Glass • Acrylic • Marble
• Wood • Leather • Metal
Trophy Making
Arts & Crafts
Store Displays
Signs and Signages
Gift Items
Fashion and Apparel
Mag-Negosyong Al-Jazib na!

Mang INASAL®
127 INASALicious stores na!
UNLIMITED RICE!
ON ALL PABORITO MEALS
The Next Big Thing in the Philippine Fastfood Industry!
www.manginasal.com

MPIC profit up 69% in Q1

Company seen to increase full-year target

By Doris C. Dumlao

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENTS Corp., the local holding company of Hong Kong-based Hon Pacific group, posted a 69-percent growth in first-quarter profit to P532 million from year-ago level.

Excluding nonrecurring gains, MPIC booked a core net income of P356 million for the first three months of 2009, up from the restated core income of P196 million a year ago.

Manila Water Services Inc. reported a net income of P695 million. Core income in the first quarter was P359 million.

Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC) registered a net profit of P312 million, with core income hitting P309 million.

The hospital group's net income for the quarter hit P126 million.

"The strong operational performance, driven by the consolidation from our toll road business and the improved financial results of our other subsidiaries and affiliates, reflect MPIC's outstanding growth quality and value creation," said MPIC president Jose Ma. Lim.

MPIC chair Manuel Pangilinan said the first quarter results would allow the company to post higher earnings for the rest of the year compared to last year. MPIC earlier gave a guidance on 2009 core net income of P1.2 billion versus P947 million last year.

"It is likely that we will guide our 2009 core net income at a level higher than originally provided. We will have a clearer idea of our latest guidance (net) number when MPIC announces its first six-month results in August of this year," Pangilinan said.

From January to March this year, Manpower billed $63.3 million (sales) revenues, up by 13.7 percent from a year ago. Service contracts also rose by 6.4 percent.

The toll roads business was boosted by a higher-than-expected rise in traffic as reported by Manila North Tollways Corp., which holds the concession to operate and maintain the North Luzon Expressway and 8.07.3 percent owned by MPTC.

Medical Doctors Inc., owner and operator of the Makati Medical Center, and Cardinal Santos Medical Center operator Cardinal Santos Hospital Managers Corp., a subsidiary of MPH, reported a 46-percent increase in consolidated revenues to P1.05 billion in the first quarter from P722 million a year ago.

Davao Doctors Hospital's first quarter net income hit P50 million, up by 58 percent from year-ago level.

Petron income jumps 33% to P874M

By Amy R. Remo

DESPITE A LOWER REVENUE LEVEL, oil industry leader Petron Corp. yesterday said its net income rose 33 percent to P874 million in the first quarter, from P656 million in the same period last year.

At the company's stockholders' meeting, Petron president Eric O. Recto reported that revenue in the first three months fell by 42 percent to P94.45 billion from P163 billion a year ago, due largely to the lower level of demand and prices.

Sales volume for the quarter fell to 8.75 million barrels from 18.48 million barrels last year. Despite this, Recto said Petron remained the industry leader with a market share of 36.3 percent as of end-March.

Also, Recto reported that the company had approved an increase in its authorized capital stock to P25 billion for 2009 from P10 billion.

The oil firm hopes to raise as much as P10 billion from a fixed-rate corporate notes placement, which is ongoing and a corporate bond placement. It also hopes to generate P13 billion from the issuance of preferred shares, he said.

"I think the interest rate environment today is very conducive to fundraising. I think the timing is good... there's liquidity and interest rates are reasonable," he said.

Petron chair-elect Ethelwoldo Fonacier Jr. Ang added that the bonds would be issued in two tranches, the first would be sometime in May to June, and the second tranche, by August to July.

"For the preferred shares, we hope we can do that before the end of this year," Ang told reporters at the sidelines of the meeting.

Proceeds from the fundraising activities will be used mainly for various investments in line with the company's aggressive expansion plan and refinery upgrades.

"These investments will give us a new revenue stream and position the company for success as we are to reopen in the demand for petroleum and petrochemical products," Ang said.

Recto explained that capital spending this year might not be "very large, because what we're doing in 2009 is that we're just starting the process for the investments in 2010."

"The bulk of the spending happens two to four years down the road. This year is not going to be a lot, but we want to prepare for it. We want to commit to those investments by raising the capital, spending what needs to be spent for the studies, down payments, among others," Recto said.

Ang also expressed confidence that the company might retain its profitability this year from a loss last year, as in 2008, Petron recorded a net loss of P15.92 billion for the first time after seven years of posting net profits.

"The conditions of sustaining this performance and even improving on it with the new business initiatives in the pipeline," Ang said, referring to Petron's first quarter performance.

Alaska Milk nets P197M

ALASKA MILK CORP. SAID ITS NET profit for the first quarter rose 129 percent to P197 million from year-ago level on higher sales volume and lower cost of raw materials and packaging.

ADIC president Wilfred Steven Uytengsu Jr. told stockholders yesterday that while 2009 would be more challenging as the full extent of the global financial crisis unfolds, the company would likely maintain its competitiveness and post better results compared to 2008.

ADIC booked P295 million in net income for the whole of last year, down from P467 million a year ago. The net profit in the first quarter of this year was already two-thirds of the profit booked for the whole of 2008.

"Considering that the Filipino consumer was already saddled with high inflation, we decided not to increase our selling prices during the year (2008). We even implemented a price rollback for a couple of products," Uytengsu said.

"We believe that in the long run, encouraging continuous consumption of milk will be beneficial not only for the consumer but also for the milk industry where we play a major role," he said.

In the first quarter of this year, ADIC's revenues went up by 24 percent to P5.46 billion year-on-year.

Doris C. Dumlao

UnionBank sees double-digit growth

THE ARCHITECTED UNIONBANK OF the Philippines sees a double-digit growth in its net profit this year compared to a year ago in view of the expansion in its loan book and fee-based earnings, as well as improved treasury gains.

UnionBank, which acquired International Exchange Bank in 2006, is also open to opportunities for expansion, through another acquisition, both chair and chief executive officer Justo Ortiz said in a briefing yesterday.

The bank was invited to join the bidding for medium-sized Philippine Bank of Communications (PBCom), but Ortiz said that on a scale of one to 10, with 10 being the highest, the likelihood that UnionBank would bid for PBCom would just be at 2 to one.

Victor Valdepeñas said lending volume was seen to grow by 10-15 percent this year, to be led by the corporate and consumer segments. In the first quarter, the bank's loan growth hit 30 percent (to P59 billion) but he said this might taper off.

Ortiz said the bank expanded its deposit base as a buffer against the global financial turmoil, hitting P168.9 billion as of end-March, up by 57 percent over a year ago.

Amid loan tightening profit margins, a big challenge for the bank is to earn more of its deposit liabilities into earning assets. At present, the loans-to-deposit ratio of 35 percent is much lower than the average industry level of about 60-70 percent.

"We will grow our loans further and more now from low yielding assets such as interbank loans and (low) capital deposit accounts," Ortiz said.

In the first quarter, UnionBank's profit dropped by 8 percent despite higher revenue from core businesses as it increased loan loss provisioning levels, boosted transaction volume and invested heavily in new technological innovation projects.

For the rest of the year, Valdepeñas said the bank's retail under-banked segment is where it will focus its future growth in core earnings should result in double-digit growth in net profits compared to last year.

In 2008, UnionBank made a net profit of P2.87 billion, 30.55 percent lower than a year ago, as the global financial turmoil pulled down trading gains.

Bank officials said the focus going forward would be on quality-driven growth in terms of loan quality. UnionBank's net nonperforming loan is only 0.98 million or 1.2 percent of total loans, much lower than the industry level.

"While it remains quite premature to declare that we have faced ourselves at a cyclical low stage of market upswings, UnionBank's performance results at the start of 2009 serve as a compelling proof to the success of our drivers strategic path towards future quality of revenues and profits," Ortiz said.

In the meantime, UnionBank reserved an investment in Mercantile Ocean, which are at advisor on the bidding for PBCom, to participate in the process.

Doris C. Dumlao

Exports still falling ... From page B1

28.4 percent to $85.81 million.

The fourth top exports with a share of 3.8 percent were cathodes and sections of cathodes made of refined copper, which slid 41 percent to $52.21 million.

Other top earners were electrical wiring harness for motor vehicles, which fell 31.7 percent to $39.89 million; parts, which banked the trend with a growth of 9.6 percent to $38.35 million; coconut oil, down 68 percent to $32.69 million; metal components, down 34.1 percent to $30.82 million; and cans, which rose 7.3 percent to $29.49 million.

Manufactured goods represented 86.2 percent of receipts and were down in value by 30.1 percent to $1.58 billion in March.

Agro-based products earned $159.71 million, or a decrease of 25.8 percent. Receipts from mineral products fell 33.6 percent to $126.66 million.

In March, the three biggest markets for Philippine goods all declined, shrinking orders for shipments.

Compared to the United States, which accounted for 37.2 percent of total outbound traffic, down 36.5 percent in $689.33 million.

Exports to Japan, the second biggest market with 13.4 percent of the total, fell 27.6 percent to $716.11 million.

Shipments to China, third at 10.6 percent of total exports, slid 41.9 percent to $549.16 million.

BSP ... From page B1

"Philippine Overseas Workers Bank" and provide financial services to OFWs, including loans to cover for placement fees of future OFWs or those reapplying for jobs abroad.

The bank will have an authorized capitalization of P2 billion and must be at least 51 percent owned by the national government.

The banking industry is subdued by its natural conservatism, but Tan is confident of the ability of the Chamber of Thrift banks, said existing banks already have a lot of services for OFWs.

5-yr T-bond rate down to 6.178%

Investors await further cut in key policy rates of BSP

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE YIELD ON FIVE-YEAR treasury bonds eased by nine basis points to 6.176 percent yesterday, anticipation of further rate in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas key policy rates.

In the last auction for five-year bonds held last April 14, the issue fetched an interest rate of 6.268.

National Treasurer Roberto B. Tan said in an interview yesterday that investors appetite was strong during yesterday's auction, in part because P82.4 billion in government debt paper would mature this week.

Also, yesterday's issue was oversubscribed as buyers tendered P11.276 billion against the the size of the Treasury's offer of P8.5 billion.

The latest bond will mature in Jan. 27, 2014, as it was negotiably issued three months ago.

"The market is very liquid due to the maturities this week," Tan said. "The government plans to reopen these bonds through more issuances by 1 stretching."

He added that investors were also expecting the BSP to continue easing its overnight borrowing and lending rates, much of which it has cut by a total of 150 basis points since December.

In April, the central bank's highest policymaking body—the Monetary Board—announced it had cut these rates further by 25 basis points and said it is poised, respectively.

The latest move was the second time the BSP cut the rates twice by 50 bps.

After last month, Tan said the government was considering to avail itself of additional official development assistance (around $500 million) as it increased the share of foreign loans in its borrowing mix.

In the years ahead, the planned P442 billion to be borrowed from domestic lenders was downsized to P419 billion.

Decision to evict oil firms from Pandacan bucked

By Abigail L. Ho

THE RECENT SUPREME COURT decision ordering the eviction of the country's three biggest oil firms from the Pandacan depot will erode investor confidence and hurt the economy, according to the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

PCCI chief Miguel Varela said the country might have trouble attracting investors if local governments, in this case the city of Manila, would be given "blanket, absolute and unfettered power" to decline zoning in their areas.

"Though we respect the ruling of the High Court in this case, we are also worried about its implications on investor confidence, and the economy as a whole, in the long run," Varela said in a statement.

The Supreme Court last week ruled that the City of Manila could enforce City Ordinance 8027, which re-localized the location of the Pandacan Oil Depot to commercial from industrial.

PCCI president Edgardo Lanzona added that the possibility of being locked out of a particular location would be a huge disincentive for investors.

"Industries will not spend millions of pesos in a particular city or province if a local governmental unit can effectively lock them out anytime," he said.

For his part, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said the Department of Energy would respect the Supreme Court decision but, at the same time, ensure that there would be no interruption in fuel supply and spike in oil prices.

He said the DOE would not allow oil firms Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Chevron Philippines Inc. to update their relocation plan as they are still "a bit shorthy."

FDI fell ...

First page B6

By Michelle V. Ramos

FOREIGN DIRECT investment (FDI) in the Philippines fell sharply by 75.2 percent to $20 million in the first two months of the year compared to $117 million in the same period last year, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The BSP attributed the downturn to "challenging global economic conditions", but said the economy continued to show "resilience" despite the weak investment appetite.

The central bank noted the most affected investment were real estate, financial intermediaries, and trade and commerce, said BSP in a statement.

FDI flows into the Philippines in 2008 reached $1.9 billion, down 47.9 percent.

The BSP said FDI was really expected to shrink. But you glean the Monetary global economy and do not that the current flow of FDI in February was encouraging.

According to official BSP projections, FDI would reach $700 million this year. PNB-compiled from AFP

PNB

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 26, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the Grand Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

The Agenda for the Meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2008 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on June 24, 2008
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2008 and Update on the Progress of the Merger of PNB with Allied Bank
5. Approval of the 2008 Annual Report
6. Approval of the following Amendment to the PNB Amended By-Laws:
   a) Article II – Board of Directors, Section 2.1- Composition, "the direction and control of the business, affairs and management of the Bank and the preservation of its assets and properties, shall be vested in a Board of Directors, consisting of fifteen (15) members duly elected as herein provided."
7. Ratification of All Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2008 Annual Stockholders Meeting
8. Election of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditor
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2008 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as the resolutions of the Board of Directors from June 25, 2008 are available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of April 27, 2009 will be entitled to notice and vote and the voted upon during the meeting. Registration will begin at 8:00 o'clock a.m. on May 26, 2009.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 20, 2009. Any proxies received will be validated by the Bank's Corporate Secretary on May 21, 2009, 2:30 p.m., at the Office of the Bank Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, April 17, 2009

RENATO C. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary

E-mail to motoring@inquirer.com.ph

MOTORING

Lito Cosa D. Mangawang

Send us your feedback, inquirer.net/motoring/blog/message to CJM (Chino) or JH (Jhun).

Never skip the test drive, experts tell buyers

By Tess R. Salazar

HOLDING THE CAR MAGAZINE to steal the review is quite different from holding the steering wheel altogether. Reading all about your prospective "dream car" can only get you so far. Test driving the unit itself should, undoubtedly, be the deciding factor. Here are tips to maximize your brief time with your prospective car.

1 **Make a list.** Of course, all brand-new cars drive like new. They would run impeccably because everything's still in their rightful place. But what of it down the line, say, three years from your purchase? So, for a forward thinker where you make the list. Ask the dealer for the proposed maintenance schedules and costs for the car for the first three years of normal use. That's what we at Inchcape Motoring have surveyed constantly in our comparison test drives, and the past heads at the UP mechanical engineering faculty agree with. The list should include warranties and parts most likely to be replaced for the first three years, and their availability and prices, of course.

Herman Lee, Speedtalk service manager and Top Gear Philippines' technical editor said that, in general, comparative costs between single units wouldn't be that significantly varied, but for companies that plan to buy fleets east of more than 50 units, differences in maintenance and parts costs between brands could turn significant.

2 Ignore the hype. The car ads appearing on TV and in print are clever marketing ploys designed to lull you into a fantasy world, and they should not decide for you. Serious buyers can hear above all the noise, and can see beyond the glitter, to put our own research, and bring your concerns up with the dealer when you do eventually visit them.

3 If you're the type of buyer that **burns a big hole in his or her wallet** with that car purchase, then that **vehicle should be truly worth it.** If you're looking for a vehicle to fulfill a certain need (emphasis on need, not want), then that vehicle should be up to the task. And don't skimping that can sometimes require more than your mere observations.

For example, if the vehicle you're eyeing will be used to carry your family, make it a point to bring them along during the test drive. Lee suggested. Why not? He explained that passengers can even offer different seating configurations. You may be comfortable driving that car, but then your passengers may all be cramped at the back end.

Let you need to know the fuel consumption rating of your prospective car? The dealers will give you their figures as mixed/varying. But if you need to know for yourself, ask someone who already owns the unit to perform a basic fuel consumption test. Next time he or she visits the pumps, have the attendant fill it up to the brim. Ask your friend to drive the vehicle around for at least 50 km (normal driving, mind you), and, when he or she returns to the same gas station and fill it up to the brim again. That should give you the rough fuel consumption of the vehicle.

Honda Cars Philippines recently ran a news release encouraging customers to test drive cars before buying their products. Car manufacturers urging buyers to test drive before deciding is always welcome advice.

4 Be mindful of how it runs, not just how it looks. Car experts advise prospective buyers to drive the car on the highway and listen for unusual noises and to feel the suspension when it runs through well-treated. Test the shifters, they should play smoothly in case it's an automatic transmission, or they should not knob wobbly if they're manual transmission.

Check the blind spots and the seating position when running, parking or handling. Find a safe area to test the brakes (and not hear for the pedal travels. The feel of the brakes should inspire confidence that the vehicle will stop in a relatively short distance.

5 The same goes for buyers of second-hand cars. However, Lee suggests that for second-hand car buyers, it might be wise to invest your budget beyond what the seller is asking to allow for "contingencies" such as unexpected repairs. Manly Edesper of Automobile Association Philippines tells Inquirer Motoring that buyers of used vehicles should always bring with them a trusted mechanic to go over the car and to check the car's registration papers with the LTO before concluding the transaction.

Shell V-Powers Formula One Ferrari

Conclusion

ON THE ROAD

Aisha Sarmiña-Mendoza

BY FORMULA ONE, THE richest, most prestigious and most widely televised motor sport in the world, fuel plays a major role in winning. Shell V-Power race fuel, which has been used by Ferrari since 2007, contributed to the team's winning five Constructors' (for F1 World Constructors' and World Drivers' Championships in 2000-2004. After powering Ferrari to 12 F1 World Drivers' and 16 World Constructors' championships, Royal Dutch Shell, Ferrari's technical partner since F1 began, may have reason to brag that not all fuels are created equal and Shell fuels are never equal from others.

Shell V-Powers race fuel remains over 200 different scientifically blended components. Aside from a team of five to seven Shell people at every F1 race, up to 50 Shell people in Shell laboratories and facilities around the world are involved with Shell's Ferrari program. Shell and Ferrari rigorously test fuels on the test track and in the laboratory. Led by Shell-trained Ferrari Technician Antonio Di Stefano Schiavo, they are united in the goal to continuously develop Shell premium fuels further and to deliver Shell V-Power technology of the future.

Sensor-test test

The program made in this global effort is put to the severest test 17 times a year at F1 Grand Prix races around the world. F1 fuels must conform to tightly controlled fuel specs set by the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), the governing body of F1 and other motor sports. Before a fuel can be used in F1, it has to be submitted for approval to the FIA, which have power-boosting chemical components and monitors all chemical ingredients.

In the Ferrari compound at every F1 venue, the Shell Track Lab is set up the Wednesday before a race weekend. "It makes sure that V-Power race fuel used in the cars will enable the drivers to achieve peak performance within FIA specs at all times," Shell scientists led by Technology manager for Ferrari Gaz Lilley analyst over 45 samples of V-Power race fuel and oils being used by the four drivers in practice, qualifying and race.

When the media invited by Shell to the 2009 F1 Chinese Grand Prix raised the Shell Track Lab on April 10, Lilley showed us a vial of the F-Pro+ fuel to be used by the Ferraris in the next day afternoon. The fuel was clear, transparent and, Lilley said, "One hundred percent unblended." Ferrari F1 engines are kept clean and shiny with V-Power race fuel helping to meet power-robbing deposits. Shell's team of chemists and mobile lab on wheels has scientific apparatus, testing equipment and computers that are used to assess the purity, cleanliness and chemical mix of the fuel, not only to give Ferrari optimum power and performance, but also to make sure that the fuel remains legal. Or, any time during a race weekend, the FIA can take a sample of fuel and if it doesn't match the preapproved fuel profile, the team can be disqualified.)

Cool fuel

Since the race fuel is an F1 car, so, per very fast, the Shell team cools V-Power race fuel before putting it into the Ferraris, keeping in mind the FIA rule that the fuel cannot be cooled lower than 10 degrees Celsius below the ambient temperature. Cooler fuel not only gives the engine more power, it takes up less space so that more can be added to the car in the same period of time during a pit stop.

After every race, Shell will mine fuel and oil samples from the cars and then sends them to the Shell lab in Chester, United Kingdom for full analysis. Within days, the results are shared with Ferrari to see how the cars' performance can be improved further for the next race.

Shell claims that V-Power race fuel has the same octane (minimum 95) as regular fuel. Technology (TMT) as V-Power race fuel. As fuel helps keep engine parts working smoothly and improves responsiveness, it claims how Shell's fueling Ferrari F1 cars ultimately responds to motorists who use V-Power road fuel. What also interested me was that Shell V-Power race fuel is absolutely the same fuel as Ferrari F1 race fuel and should be available in Europe and Thailand. Here's hoping that Filipinos Shell will also sell V-Power. Read here.

Love and hate

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

THERE ARE CARS THAT SEEM. THERE are the ones that deliver above and beyond the needs of drivers. There there are those that just miss the plot completely, barely able to muster enough competence for a decent trip to the local grocery.

In truth, most cars find themselves in the gray nether region of automotive ability, falling somewhere in-between blindingly brilliant and generically crippled. It takes a special breed of car to perfectly straddle the very middle of the vehicular spectrum. And after years of testing, this extraordinary car has been found.

This accolade goes to the 2009 Ford Focus TDCI.

No other car has been able to elicit praise and grief in the same breath, confidence and worry in the same pedal stroke. This is a car that embodies love and hate at the same time.

Perplexing nature

Getting into the driver's seat is where the perplexing nature of this marvel. Point begins. First of all, the driving position is exemplary, albeit a little spotty for those who have driven strapped on a multipoint safety harness in the course of their driving lives. The passenger seat is slung much lower in the cabin, shielding subliminally to one noise of the relationship between the salaried man and the warm body in the right seat. Everything is perfect at this point.

And as you are about to convince yourself that there has been some serious thought thrown into the ergonomics of the front cabin, the Focus starts to show its true colors.

The wonderfully upright driver's seat has no enveloped and comes firm support for the small of the back. It is so unyielding you will need to build a relationship with your local chiropractor. And despite the upright position, your vision isn't improved. Discerning the critical corners of your field of vision are some of those massive and ill-placed A-pillars that are typical of most designs these days.

There is a need to cause your neck forward to get a glimpse of where one is going in turn in, even if you are six foot tall and seated upright. Who knows? Maybe this car requires the driver's vision so that he/she won't be able to properly sight iffy corners and attack them with gusto. This is a cruel safety mechanism, perhaps?

Many have reviewed the stock-standard engine on this vehicle. Good money says that at least one of the thousand burning reviews of this car has used the line that the 2.0-litre turbocharged CD20 unit, with 340 Nm of torque, will make you scream like a schoolgirl in a three-inched spike. They are right. There is no better description of the brutal initial acceleration that this car has. Add to that the fact that this is a car that weighs almost a ton and a half and the Ford suits seem to have gotten the choice of engine spot-on.

No one sometimes though the rough and perky nature of this engine at low speeds. It may be the turbocharger. It may be gearbox or the variable nature of turbo. Whatever it is, drivers will surely learn to get smiles and relieved at speed, not while crawling their way through traffic.

Daylight saloffs also mean he properly tinged in a slightly rotted steering wheel followed by a wide-open throttle situation will result in dramatic torque steer. Not that one is supposed to belt away from stoplights like a teenager given every single chance, but this is an engine that encourages that sort of behavior.

Balancing between road feel, comfort

Another point of contention is the suspension of the car. One can say that Ford has done a decent job balancing between the road feel needed to make heels or tells of all that post-up aggression and the comfort that is demanded by everyday roads. What this really translates into is a wishy-washy compromise that will note neither of these ends well. It is way too taut for daily motion, yet it is not super fun closer with debutantes of sporting ambition. Choosing one or the other would have been exactly better.

After everything that's been said, there will still be those who will extol the true nature of this car as its best point. Sadly, the imagined relationship with the Focus WRC will most likely be the main culprit. The answer to this is a big fat no. Simply, there is no such a good thing, if it translates into the primal, visceral manner with which until car devours the open road. When a car is overwhelming to the senses directly because of its pure ability, it is one. Anything else is half-baked.

Compact SUVs that don't downsize expectations

Text and photos by Charles E. Bahas

THIS WINTER SHOULD TELL THE tale of the "crossovers"—car-based sport utility vehicles—that buyers think owners a dash of off-road bravado without resorting to fuel use, middling driving abroad maneuvers as well as the need for large maneuvering space.

Automakers are very aware that the biggest challenge facing their crossover models is the sheer variety of competition and the dwindling number of car buyers as a result of the prevailing economic climate.

For instance, Subaru is offering its 2012 Forester a very safe and stable ride with its trademark Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive and fuel-efficient 2.5-liter engine that results in vehicles with much less-or-noise of gravity.

Even Subaru's family-oriented Forester is no exception. Equipped with either a 170-horsepower 2.0-liter D variant) or a 230-hp 2.5-liter turbocharged engine (XT variant), the Forester also comes with an all-wheel-drive system that happens itself.

SUBARU Forester confidence-inspiring

HONDA CRV provides versatility.

Based on this writer's experience (taking the 2.0S variant for a spin), the Forester felt solid, secure and highly capable.

While safely ensconced in the Forester's suspension system and its ability to corner better (and a lot quicker), this writer also appreciated the commanding view of the road that one is supposed to get in an SUV.

Attractive choice

Since comfort and cargo space are two features that top the list of most car buyers considering a crossover, the Honda CR-Z has also become another attractive choice.

Indeed, the cut-like CR-V was arguably the best major crossover vehicle that came to showcase in the mid-'90s when huge and big-engined SUVs were still the norm.

But this doesn't mean you have to downsize your expectations because while the CR-V is much bigger, it's more nimble and exhibits no violent body roll when taking corners that is endemic in mid-SUVs.

Steering is also commendable. The first time this writer realized the CR-V was headed straight into an unavoidable pothole, I relaxed in anticipation of springs and sounds punching their way up through the hood.

Result

The result? CR-V's suspension just mildly thumped and that's it.

Aside from the serene ride it offers, the CR-V's 166-hp, 2.4-liter engine (there's also an available 148-horsepower, 2.0-liter engine) is more than enough to carry its relatively light 1,600-kg body weight and deliver a lively driving experience.

Cargo space is also commendable as the CR-V's compact frame could load up a bubblegum bus.

More space

And because the rear seats could be sacrificed forward, it still have more than enough space for two big luggage.

That, can't-stand-it-like Subaru Forester and Honda CR-V lack the rough-road capability of their full-sized brethren (you can also forget about serious towing) but for everyday road use, these compact SUVs just makes much more sense.

BUSINESS

FDI fell 75.2% to $29M as of Feb., says BSP

25 must-haves for a real SUV

- New 5+2 Seat System
  Fully reconfigurable seats to suit all traveling needs.
- 2.0L VCDi with variable geometry turbo-charged diesel engine and a 2.4L gasoline engine
- 5-speed Tiptronic Automatic Transmission
  Automatic transmission changes into manual mode at your fingertips.
- Self-leveling suspension
  Automatically lifts rear suspension when carrying heavy loads.
- ABS (Anti-Lock Braking System)
- Projector-type Headlamps with leveling device
- ESP (Electronic Stability Program)*
  Enhances vehicle stability during an evasive situation.
- TCS (Traction Control System)*
  Minimizes wheel spin and slippage during acceleration.
- HDC (Hill Descent Control)*
  Improves maneuvering on steep downhill driving.
- Multi-information Display*
  Digitally informs you of all driving information.
- 17-inch alloy wheels
- FFV and Biodiesel Compatible
- TCM (Transmission Control Module)
  In auto mode, gear shifts are made at the right speed and time to best suit driving conditions.
- Speed-sensing auto door locks
- Roof airbags
- Roof spoiler with third brake lamp
- Front and rear skid plates
- Automatic head lamps*
  Turns on instantly when the vehicle approaches dark areas.
- Rain sensor*
  Automatically activates rain wipers when raindrops appear on the windshield.
- Back-up sensor*
- Multi-function steering wheel*
  Controls audio system with ease.
- Lumbar support*
  Added comfort for driver.
- Immobilizer Key
  Anti-theft immobilizer key.
- Active On Demand AWD*
  Automatically adjusts torque to both front and rear axles.
- Zero carbon monoxide emission

The New 7-seater Chevrolet Captiva

A real SUV offers more than just great looks. Chevrolet Captiva is the only SUV powered by the latest VCDi 2.0L commonrail diesel and 2.4L gasoline engines, which is also compatible with up to B5 Biodiesel or E10 alternative fuels. With all of the above advanced features, Chevrolet Captiva is ready to take SUV driving to new heights. Make sure you know what it's like to drive a real SUV.

A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

CHEVROLET

*2WD only

Cut this out for comparison when making a decision on a real SUV.

CAPTIVA FULLY-LOADED

Villa Verde East
RESIDENTIAL ESTATES
via Antipolo, Rizal

Comfort Living...

Call : 635.49.46

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Contributing Editor Lia B. Navarro

LIFESTYLE Home & Entertaining

ART Deco resident Ismail.

Bohol resort is Visayan furniture showcase

French write-up raves about Amarela resort on Panglao island for its furniture

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

AFTER A FRENCH WRITER PAMED POETIC about Amarela in Hinagdan Island, Bohol, and its medley of lush folk furniture, his countrymen have been checking the resort out to see if the on-line rapture hasn't overblown hype. This three-year-old, 28-room resort has become a must-go place.

Corporate lawyer Lucas Narag was planning to build a vacation house in his home province. But when he started doing the paperwork for its construction, a

BOHOL 12

SUN DOUBLE Unlimited
UNLIMITED MOBILE AND UNLIMITED LANDLINE IN ONE

DALAWANG MATINDING UNLIMITED SERVICES, PINAG-ISA NA!

FREE SAMSUNG C5212 DUAL-SIM HANDSET!
FOR ONLY ₱799 MONTHLY

SA PANAHON NGAYON, DAPAT PRACTICAL-DAPAT UNLIMITED!
(Promo period: May 10 - August 31, 2009)

Also available SunTel Wireless Landline Plan 499

Choose from these FREE phones

PLAN	Monthly Fee	Free Phone
250 Line Only	₱ 250	n/a
499	₱ 499	Simple 399
799	₱ 799	Dual SIM

Be accessible wherever, whatever!
Visit any of The Sun Shops in Metro Manila or call 311-5000

* Local but to Sun calls and texts only. Plus 300 free SMS to other networks.
** No "SO" calls. SunTel is officially available in NCR.
All other services will be charged the applicable rates.
SunTel Wireless Landline is a service of Digital Telecommunications Phils., Inc.

SUN CELLULAR
Better network, better value.

It's easier to get a loan from us than to read this headline.

Build your Dream

Expect more from BPI Family Savings Bank's Build your Dream housing loan. Call 845-6888, text 0908-886-xpress (9738-773737) and send to 2911 (P1000) or visit any of our more than 600 branches.

BPI Family Savings Bank

Bohol resort is Visayan fu

From page C1

SLEEKING Boston boasts a plastic china side table at the open court

VENETIAN barrier fenced in solid mahogany and iron

OLD-STYLE bistro or lounge chair with canvas covering

ANTIQUE egg beater used in making Boston cakes

SCULPTURE by unknown artist is framed on a dancing or wedding horse.

LOCAL painter Guy Custodio's impression of a traditional Boholano eco-painting using oil on wood

MAKE THE CITY SMALLER.

NOW YOU CAN AFFORD TO LIVE IN THE MIDDLE OF

Not all dream purchases come with a hefty price tag. At Avida Tow
ultra-chic condo units with equally appealing finance options. So you
favorite malls, restaurants and supermarkets in Makati. And still have

For more information, visit www.avidaland.com

CATCH THE GRAND LAUNCH OF AVIDA TO

urniture showcase

DRAGON from an ancient lifeboat is recycled into a water spout.

...smaller chairs). ...he Bohol would ...ancient pieces ...e. The presence ...e new creative ...infuses the envi- ...time-worn and ...vide the impos- ...ble symmetry

...r and furniture ..., Bohol, Leyte, ...he same design ...pany, the pieces ...teria-mid-seven ...elaborate as the ...ventura and the ...r legacy and bal- ...ishmidaria in Ba- ...e sophisticated ...made for the ...

In "Inhod: The Heart of Bohol," cultural historian Ramon Villegas wrote that during the late 19th century the local furniture makers tried to mimic the imported styles for the mass market. However, the furniture lacked the proportion, refinement and craftsmanship. Chairs of mediocre standard were called silyang basta or the common chair. He notes that in that era, Bohol furniture pieces became shoddy, using sub-standard materials.

Bajaneta says vintage common furniture is also low in value, between P3,000 to P5,000.

Tradition survives

Today Bohol furniture-making has survived. Still, the quality of these production pales in comparison to their precedents. Even Neong laments that craftsmen resort to cheaper materials instead of pure cutters to make cuts swerving.

Hatag set up a furniture workshop to give jobs and to reproduce furniture for Amanda. He also established a gallery which features modern artists. A recent exhibit paid homage to the icon paintings, religious paintings similar to the Byzantine style, done on wood.

All these handicrafts are in danger of extinction. Amanda, in its own way, is keeping them alive. This is a good example of how tourists brings benefit to a sustainable future.

WALL features a carved duladoard from an old house. At the background are modern sarongs capiz-edge, sala mirror and panels, and bedroom door from antique windows.

MODERN take on primitive Visayan furniture with modern top and polishings. Parts of an antique corn grinder and a wooden basin for rice cakes make an interesting tableau.

A CHAIR using composite pieces of old molave, abundant in Bohol.

Avída
Affordable living at its best
an Ayala Land company

EVERYTHING.
...rs San Lorenzo you'll find a range of ...can live within walking distance of your ...e same money left over to spend there.

Avída Towers
San Lorenzo

...WERS SAN LORENZO TODAY. CALL 848 5200

STUART Tolley meets the BeoSound 5 on Singapore shores.

BANG & Olufsen products have high "Wife Acceptance Factor," which means they're highly favoured for our clutching with a mother's decor and interiors. The new BeoSound 5 may be set up on a tabletop or mounted on a wall.

This high-end hi-fi senses your music mood, adjusts to it

Bang & Olufsen's BeoSound 5 is 'all about the touch'

By Cheche V. Moral

HOW DOES A HI-FI AUdio system that can store music of up to 8,000 CDs...or a 500-gigabyte memory, if you have that many — and can access virtually any audio station from all corners of the globe sound to you?

Let's mention that even more: How about that same system automatically resuming playback from your own music collection, and you only have to pick the first song? Or, more bonding up your tiny MP3 player on to a dock when you get home, listening to the same old tracks from your third playlist or two, you know, the same one you listen to every single day in your car.

High-end electronics maker Bang & Olufsen's latest innovation called BeoSound 5 is the ad-libbiest to the record tunnel of accidentally digital music players that become dependable every few months. Audio geeks describe it as ahead of its time, but its creators like to underscore that Old World marries high-tech to chic audio system.

"It's a tactile experience," said Oliver Waldhegrin, concept and product developer at the recent media launch in Singapore. "We're very physical. We're all about the touch."

Outstanding feature

He refers to the BeoSound 5's touchscreen navigation wheel that's smashed to the digital music towns.

BeoSound 5 is composed of a tabletop or wall-mounted controller with a crisp LCD interface and an aluminum scroll wheel. It's hooked onto the BeoMaster, which is essentially the hard drive with a 500-gigabyte capacity, with Internet connections that enable you to access radio and music on the Web.

"It doesn't mean that because we're gone digital, we're ejecting buttons," Waldhegrin continued. "We combine mechanics and touch. Touch screen is a very different flavor of interaction. It just doesn't feel like anything. We'd much rather have physical buttons ... When you touch aluminum, you feel the weight, the material work."

Perhaps the most sentimental feature of the BeoSound 5 is its sound-sensing algorithm, based technology called Web (Voice of the Scene), which analyses the music you listen to — its beat, melody, rhythm, syncopation, vocal har-

OLIVER Waldhegrin: "The luxury market has a higher repurchase rate. If it's got to be good, it's got to work 100 percent of the time."

monies...and automatically creates a playlist of similar tracks from your music library, allowing you to "rediscover" forgotten tracks or albums from your own collection. Type it causes you need such glorious time.

Also still "kill boredom" from playing the same tracks over and over, said Imran Tolly, product and branding manager at Bo Inn Pacific.

SPLITTER: digital audio system with a cut-to-design time monitor, watching CDs.

The average person, he added, has only one to three playlists from his personal music library. He said the difference between Mozi (which has two patents pending for the consensus) and earlier technologies like Apple's Genius, is that the former adds music from your own existing collection, not music that you should purchase on music vendors like iTunes.

"Our designs are very classic," Imran Mirza, managing director for Asia, stressed. "When people invest 2,500 to 10,000 euros in a product, it's important that, two years later, you're not, 'Ah, it's old version.' We're conscious about not being 'in fashion.' It's not fun to be out of fashion. When you're talking expensive products, it should last for many years."

Mirza, who grew up in the Danish village where the Bang & Olufsen factory was founded and located, still has the audio system he received as a gift on his Catholic confirmation when he was 12 years old. It has been over 30 years.

In his home in Singapore, he has kept a classic picture-tube-based TV set that the company stopped producing three years ago. That, alongside his newest LCD and plasma sets.

Guinea pigs

Growing up in the small town of Struer in southwest Denmark, Myrup went to school with the grandchildren of Svend Olufsen and Peter Bang, the company founders.

"My late friend's father was the R&D director, so we kids were guinea pigs at six or seven years old, for new prototype products," he recalled. "If kids can do it, you can do it. It has a logical approach ... [the maker] produces for famous beings. We don't make products for engineers."

With the BeoSound 5, he said he gets a reward trip back home as he's able to access local friends and relatives.

Myrup also noted that Bang & Olufsen products have high Wife or Wife Acceptance Factor. "It has female appeal," he said with a grin.

BeoSound 5, which retails for roughly 58,000-100 (about P160,000), is available to order at Bang & Olufsen in Greenbelt 5, Makati City, through its exclusive Philippine retailer, Iberia Specialties Inc.

"[BeoSound 5] is a conversation piece. And you don't want to see that in your high-end living room," Waldhegrin noted. "It should complement the environment. It should stand out in luxury settings, we're trying to get to where you are, what you need ... to keep us who are set and embrace the new technologies."

Bang & Olufsen had suffered many losses following the credit crunch, with sales dropping to Asia Pacific by 29 percent.

"But 20 percent isn't bad in this environment," Myrup said. "The luxury industry is 20-25 percent down worldwide." Late last year, the company decided to close its mobile phone manufacturing unit, though Myrup said it will introduce this year one gift item in the B&O range and a new flowerpriced tie line by company standards TV concept.

"You can sit in a cinema and cry with the screams, or go to your R&D and invest more and make sure this make product that make you excited," he said. "Maybe they won't buy this month, but maybe next month. We have had to trim one company but we can look on our R&D budget. We believe in the future."

LARS Myrup: "Not everyone wants to get home and think their iPod and have the little thing hooked to something bigger ... The BeoSound 5 is a unique concept. We have nothing to compare it with."

Write a blog, win a washer

DOING THE LAUNDRY is without question a tiring chore, especially for those who just don't have the free because of work, responsibility or simply doesn't have the help of extra working hands. Understanding its consumers need to manage time, most especially when it comes to tackling laundry, Electrolux Philippines offers consumers the chance to win its latest front load washer-appliance worth P35,000. Simply log on to their web site, www.electrolux.com.ph, and fill out their short survey to qualify for the raffle draw on July 30.

Get a chance to be recognized and rewarded for your passion for clothes and blogging. Electrolux, the thoughtful design innovator, invites all bloggers to write about the brand's latest front load washer from April 20 to June 30. Subject of the blog must be "How will an Electrolux front load washer complement your passion for clothes?" The blog must not be more than 300 words and should be posted in an accessible anywhere entry can be entered. Send the link of your site with the posted blog to download@mwmedia.biz or info@mwmedia.com. Judging will be held on July 9 by representatives from Electrolux Philippines, Inc.

With two simple options to visit an Electrolux front load washer, visit any Home Insight Showroom] make life a little easier—download a front load. For more information about Electrolux's lifestyle and environmentally friendly appliances, call its customer care hotline at 845-Care (2273) or domestic toll-free number 1-800-10-845-Care (2273). Visit www.electrolux.com.ph.

LIFESTYLE Home&Entertaining

Heralding the dawn of LED television

Samsung's newest baby is as much a fashion statement as a home appliance

LET LED TV rock your home.

By Irene C. Perez

THE BATTLE OF FLAT TVS isn't just about size anymore. The bigger, the thinner, the more stylish—that's been. It's the modern home's ultimate accessory, a conversation piece just like an artwork. It should blend well with the furniture and look good even when turned off.

Samsung, for example, is recently launched its newest baby, the Samsung LED Full HD TV, a slim and sleek TV that uses light emitting diodes (LED) as primary light source instead of the usual cold cathode fluorescent lamps, for clearer viewing and crisper colors.

LEDs produce darker blacks and richer colors for high contrast. Samsung LED TV also has auto Motion Plus technology that reduces image blurring.

Samsung president and CEO Spencer Shin and vice president Jay Ha led the roadshow that showcased the newest Samsung products from TV to digital cameras.

Recipes, anyone?

LED TVs are an upgrade from the usual liquid crystal display models. It comes in two models, B7000 and B6000, both with a smooth, crystal design that uses dark injection molding in lieu of many coats for a translucent, smooth polished appearance.

They come in a deep piano black finish with a light ruby crystal design around

CONTENT library Hub feature lets you enjoy downloaded recipes and games.

SAMSUNG vice president Jay Ha and president and CEO Spencer Shin check out the Samsung product display at NBC Tent.

WORLD-CLASS wrist jeweler Suarez

HIGHWORLD Ingan Andrew Ilar

ATTRACTIVE Cristine Tan

AMONG the sponsors was QC Mayor Feliciano Belmonte

COLLEGE Arias and beloved, Spanish Ambassador Luis Arias

ISABELA Gov. Grace Padaca with exhibit directors Gallorin Dorotea's Elleana Diaz

FORMER First Lady Imelda Marcos and Lorna Lunel

Betsy Westendorp showcases her 'abstract dreams'

THE WORLD-RENOWNED LADY OF class, taste and mega-talent, **Betsy Westendorp**, may have been born a Spanish celebrity with Dutch lineage, but she has always been a Filipino at heart. She first set foot in the country in 1951. Awhile, when she met her husband, the late Tony Brias, a Filipino-Spanish businessman in Madrid and made their home in Manila. She gave birth to all her three daughters here.

Today, with hundreds of glorious paintings treasured as private collections and displayed in galleries in Europe and the Philippines, including Malacañang Palace, Betsy denies that a thirteen-minutes magnified the percentage for her works, adding that, as proven by an overwhelming solid, which opened at the Manchini Fernandez Salon in Greenbelt Mall of Ayanda Center, with no less than President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in guest of honor.

MEN AND WOMEN of manners do the ribbon cutting: The host and hostess, Jorge L. Araneta and his wife Stella Marquez de Araneta, guest of honor President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo with the women of the hour, renowned painter Betsy Westendorp, and Mars Marquez

JOSE Pablo and husband Emre Rubio

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Hunter Arnaiz by

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **9R1** Photo Solutions

A great art experience for multi-genre and art aficionados alike, Betsy's paintings have been lauded as "poetic impressionism" and "abstract dreamscaping with flight." Now 81 and young at heart, she continues to paint a range of subjects, from landscapes, floral paintings, portraits, plus, plus.

Betsy is respected and greatly admired by Filipino art lovers like PLDT hotshot brilliant president **Manny Pangilinan**, herself a proud owner of a Silverstrings painting which hangs in his Hong Kong home. He attended the exhibit, pulangui.

How her late art changed since her first visit to the Philippines? "Come and tell me," is exquisite Betsy usually told me. Betsy continues to explore it with her heart and eyes, guiding beauty in the process, dahlings.

BETSY Westendorp with art collector, PLDT president Manny Pangilinan

NEHE Quinnae in front of her life-size portrait by Betsy Westendorp

BenCab Museum inauguration

It was close to having a waffle jam at Tuba, Benguet, dahlings, when former Brunei's art collectors and lovers went to rock Baguio one weekend for the grand inauguration of the modern, eye-catching BenCab (Ben Cabrera) Museum on that hood.

"I first had the crazy dream to build a museum for his vast collection of Cordillera artifacts and Philippine contemporary art for the past 40 years," said witty and respected BBC anchorman Ben Hinon, the perfect master of ceremonies, pulangui.

In his speech, BenCab said: "I had longed to leave some kind of legacy behind, to share my art collection with the next generation of art enthusiasts."

DINE AND DOO Chat at Singapore Tyler Prize Initiative with Rosalyn Kinsey of Christie's Singapore and Sylvia Garcia of Finale Gallery

ALBERT Reed

NATIONAL Artist Ben "BenCab" Cabrera with his longtime inspiration and companion, to emperor Annie Sorilleo

ENGR. Nick Suarez, Arch. Raymond Sarmiento and wife Anna Lumbera Ocampo

HAVAIANAS brand manager Romina de Leon

ANNE Gonzalez, Havaianas Philippines managing director

BETTE Tovera and Vivi Soriano of Finale Gallery

HANSEL Ongpin, Deanna Ongpin Bentu, BenCab and Emilyn Herbosa

PAINTER Tina Hugnis and Perry Hugnis of PINKY Bugnis

PAINTER Cheby Dans

TALL-mannen Hotelier Sergio Ayala with Pam Pham Baca and Rica Hizon

FRIENDLIES Gilda Taleon and photographer Tommy Hidalgo

INTERNATIONAL interior designers Jonathan Hand and Hot

METRO magazine editor Kristine Hidalgo

WEDDING bells sang next year for popular couple Joey Mead and Ian Berg

SAMSUNG PHILIPPINES TEAM. Vice president for product leader Burns Ramirez, corporate marketing head Elmon Marvin Gilmoga, president Shim, product marketing group head Anthy Navarro and sales head Ernesto Mauricio

Heralding the dawn of LED television

From page B1

the edges.

Samsung isn't kidding when it says "ultra-thin." The LED TVs are just over an inch thick; your laptop or mobile phone is probably bulkier. You can hang it on your wall as you would a painting, using Samsung's wall-to-wall solution, which bounces the gap between the TV and the wall from 2 to .06 inches.

Samsung lets you maximize your LED TV with the Content Library Flash, a database that allows you to upload recipes, exercise videos or photos using a flash disk. TVs like browsing your computer for files, but on your TV.

LED TVs are energy-free and uses the Energy Star 3.0 guidelines, which help cut power consumption up to 40 percent less than traditional LCD HDTVs of similar size. It also has an energy-saving mode that adjusts the backlight and picture quality while producing more natural images.

ST10 12.2-megapixel slimcam

Slick

With the development of LED TVs, is there still room for LCD TVs?

Very much so, said Elmon Marvin Gilmoga, Samsung Phil. corporate marketing head.

"There's still a market for LCD TVs, since it provides a shift from conventional TVs to digital," he said.

And even if the local technology we have is analog, Gilmoga said having a LED TV will help maximize one's TV viewing.

"LED and LED TVs help you optimize all the materials you watch from it," added Jimpy Navarro, product marketing head.

Along with LED TVs, Samsung also launched three new LCD models: the B750 TV with wide color enhancer technology; B650 with Auto Motion Plus for sharp images even during scary action scenes; and the 6650/6450, which has Digital Digital Contrast technology for refined picture quality all are high-definition and would make any TV junkie happy.

And here's something TV owners would want to check out for a grand multimedia experience: the HT-BD1250 Home Theater System, which goes with the Samsung HT-S815 Speaker Bar for true rich, realistic audio in strong surround sound; and the BD-P4600, the first wall-mountable Blu-ray player in the market.

"Samsung is No. 1 in the global and local LCD market," Samsung product head, at Ronna Hontiveros said. "Each product has a warranty and would do well with the lifestyle of the Filipino family."

SAMSUNG HT-BD1250 Blu-ray 5.1 Channel Home Theater

BD-P4600 wall-mountable Blu-ray player

Pick your perfect holiday with Singapore Airlines

Enjoy these all-inclusive deals

SINGAPORE 3 DAYS/2 NIGHTS USD 378

KUALA LUMPUR 3 DAYS/2 NIGHTS USD 498

HONGKONG (MACO) 3 DAYS/2 NIGHTS USD 558

BALIKPAPAN + SINGAPORE 4 DAYS/3 NIGHTS USD 598

Discover more reasons to enjoy Singapore! Fly on the world's most awarded airline, and receive exclusive vouchers that are redeemable at over 300 shops and restaurants in the award-winning Changi Airport. Whether you wish to explore the many exotic cultures and sights of the city, or plan for an exciting stopover, Singapore Airlines offers a variety of specially designed packages at great prices. So book, enjoy thrilldelic, plan personal inflight entertainment system, and the inflight service even when airlines talk about. For more information, contact your local travel agent, call Singapore Airlines Reservations on 756 8888, Singapore Airlines Tours Desk on 759 9191/2 or 756 8888 local 7801, or visit singaporeair.com

CHANGI AIRPORT SINGAPORE UNIQUELY Singapore SIA Holidays

Sports apparel sale

ROYAL SPORTSWEAR HOUSE's "ROYAL Sportsfest 2009" is ongoing until May 17 at 24... Mid Trade Hall, Festival Supermall, Alabang. Footwear and apparel for nearly every sport and everyday casual clothing are on sale at up to 70 percent off. Brands include Reebok, Rockport, Vans and Jansport. Call 8828010 or visit www.festivalsupermall.com.

Free healing sessions

A free "Pranavita Energy" Healing Therapy, sponsored by Bioenergetics Training Center (BTC), will be held today, 10 and 16, 12 noon-7 p.m., at Unit 1117, Cityland 10 Tower 1, 4th to Ayala Ave., Makati. The therapy utilizes a new technique for people to experience improved health based on natural and scientific principles. The free sessions also feature "Stellar Beam Therapy." Call 7520806, 7525916, 0917-7526806, 0920-6380920, e-mail nuel@bioenergetics-center.com.

Lighting workshop

The next Person on Lighting workshop is set May 20-21, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., at Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Avenue, Ayala Triangle, Makati City. The workshop allows participants to learn the fundamental principles of lighting, master the primary controllable characteristics of light, become familiar with different lighting tools used in the studio and on location, master the systematic way of setting up lighting, and "read" lighting conditions for best lighting design and exposure. Pre-register for pacing a partial payment of at least P500 (non-refundable) on or before May 23. A five-percent discount will be extended to those who will settle in full on or before the deadline. Call 892-1801, 0917-5594413, e-mail cmc-mila@skillsfoundation.org.ph; visit www.filipinaslibrary.org.ph.

Pangasinan hideaway

Puerto del Sol, an exclusive seaside resort in Bolinao, Pangasinan, offers elegant lodging and leisure activities for travelers going north. The 16,000-sq-m resort has roomy function rooms perfect for small gatherings or large conferences, as well as finely furnished mansion villas and mini huts with spa services. Other amenities include a pool surrounded by manicured gardens, jacuzzi, children's pool, bar and restaurant. Game rooms and recreational facilities for the adventurous such as kayaks, canoes, billiards, hockey darts, mahjong and ridesides are also available. Call 8332547, 8312991. Visit www.puertodelsol.com.ph.

Belly dance fest

Pearl Performance Studio, located at McGeeks Bldg. on Hostal Ave., Quezon City, will host another belly dance festival, Bellydrid 2009, May 21 at the Glorietta Activity Center, Ayala Center, Makati. Nine on-site workshops, Bellydrid will feature a mother of belly dance-related workshops such as basic belly dancing, demonstrations on playing doumbek or darbuka (Middle Eastern instruments), playing finger cymbals, costuming, and more. Total number of performers will be around 60-70, with the special participation of Asian dance diva Regine Tolentino. Call 07 32466, 0917-8347334.

Fashion show

MUD Modeling & Entertainment Center presents Summer Ballet Showdown at Park Terraces on May 17. The show features a fashion show with kids and teens, with guest star Maggie Wilde. Pina is expected to emcee the event. Show starts lunchtime, followed at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. MUD offers monthly workshops in modeling, singing, dancing and acting. Call 0921-4864278, 3914830, 3615480.

Ben Farrales exhibit

The Filipino Heritage Festival will open an exhibit of Ben Farrales on May 13, 5 p.m., at SM Megamall Mezzanine. Call 8924865.

Food, wine fest

The European Food and Wine Festival 2009 will be held May 15-17 at Rockwell Tent.

SM MALL OF ASIA is hosting three big concerts happening in May and June at the Mall of Asia Complex. It has been the preferred venue of many concerts and events participated by both foreign and local artists easily accommodating a crowd of 100,000.

On May 22, MTV Philippines and other organizations worldwide will launch MTV EXIT, an advocacy campaign to raise awareness against human trafficking. MTV Philippines will stage a concert at the SM Mall of Asia Open Concert Grounds with known performers such as Itchyworms, Spongecola, Kamikazee, Parokya ni Edgar, Pupil, Pochoy Laboy, Dusties.

enjoy great discounts up to 50% off ticket prices, buy 1 200ml Clear bottle at any SM Supermarket. Present the CLEAR proof of purchase at any Ticketworld and Ticketnet outlets and get your Gold ticket for only P3,800. Silver ticket for only P1,400 and General Admission ticket for P500 (+ 3% service charge on all ticket prices). Ticket promo is from May 1 to 31, 2009.

"We want to make the event a great experience for both the artists and audience, and make sure that they have fun safely."

During concerts, SM Mall of Asia's traffic management assures the highest level of security and convenience for both visitors and performers. "We want to make the event a great experience for both the artists and audience, and make sure that they have fun safely," says Steven Tan, AVP for Operations. The mall's 8,000 available parking slots, accessibility to public transportation and endless choices of shopping and dining options at the mall and San Miguel by the Bay make it a concert destination. Taking convenience to a whole new level, mall parking is equipped with the latest technology - the PlateFinder, wherein indicator lights above every slot make finding it so easy.

Rico Blanco, Kjwan, and Sugarfree. For more details, log on to www.mtvphil.com.

On May 16 at 8PM, two of the biggest American Idols Season 7 perform live in Manila at SM Mall of Asia Open Concert Grounds! Catch American Idol David Cook, together with Idol Runner-up David Archuleta in a back-to-back concert brought to you by the Metro Card Club and Fearless Productions, Inc. This is an event you can't miss! For ticket inquiries, please call Ticketnet at 911 5555 or log on to ticketnet.com.ph or Ticketworld at 8919999 or log on to ticketworld.com.ph.

And on June 11 at 8PM, the Pussycat Dolls strut their stuff in DOLL DOMINATION at the MOA Open Concert Grounds brought to you by CLEAR & MTV Philippines! Let them take the hotness meter a notch hotter. To

SM Mall of Asia has become more than just a place to shop. Steven adds, "I think one of the reasons that SM Mall of Asia is a choice venue for these artists is that they know that it is a destination for many families. We look forward to hosting more concerts for our customers in the months to come."

LIFESTYLE Home&Entertaining

KIDS' CAMP

If you think all rolls are the same, maybe you haven't tasted Red Ribbon Rolls

It's more beautiful with Red Ribbon

PDI LIFESTYLE KITCHEN-TESTED RECIPE

'BAON' OF THE WEEK

Pink citrus juice

The secret to the drink's pink color is grenadine syrup

By Marnes Chikiamco
Contributor

ONE OF MY KIDS' FAVORITE drinks is a popular restaurant is pink lemonade. Children especially love it because it looks so appealing and attractive. And with real fruit juice in it, the drink is rich in vitamins, too.

You don't have to go to a restaurant to enjoy this beverage. Instead, make your own pink citrus juice at home. The secret to giving the drink an attractive pink color is grenadine syrup. Made with pomegranate, grenadine is also a main ingredient in making Shirley Temple, a non-alcoholic cocktail. Some grenadine syrups may contain alcohol so check the label carefully before using.

Pink Citrus Juice
2 servings

½ c freshly squeezed calamansi juice
½ c sugar
2 c cold water
1 tsp grenadine syrup
Ice cubes

PAGE E2

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Fundraising golf tournament** /E3
■ **Showcase of Filipino inventions** /E4

Get amazing abs in just 15 minutes!

FREE

ABS TONING STARTER PROGRAM

When you sign up on May 11-13, 2009

Forget old-fashioned crunches and sit-ups that only give you backache and body pains! Get the all-in-one-burn way to firmer, flatter and sexier abs. Marie France's 15-Minute Abs Toning Treatment:

- Firms up the sags and strengthens the muscles
- Tones a flabby tummy for a tighter look
- Equals to the effects of 325 sit-ups while you're comfortably lying down
- No surgery, injections, crash diets or exercises

„See how it'll work for you!„

Plus, free, fabulous abs: Only at Marie France. Call now for a FREE body analysis.

894-BODY (2639)

www.marie-france.com.ph

marie france

Intelligent choice: Omron Intellisense Blood Pressure Monitor

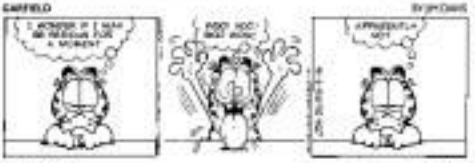
IA2

OMRON

10% OFF

Collins

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS



JL LIPIN — BY JOSE LARRIA

FUGGO BARDY — BY RYL JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEHONOTE — BY ELIZABETH CHOMICO

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PABALINAS

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

TULDOK — BY RAMA COLL

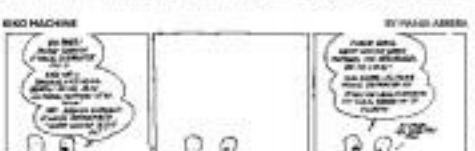
BEN — BY DAVID SHELTON

ATOMO AND WEEDY — BY VERA GARCELLANO

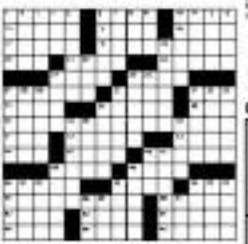
HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DIANE

EGO MACHINE — BY MANS ABRERA



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

		2	1				4	9
	1					3		
3					7			
2				4				
9	7	3		5		6	8	
4			8	9				2
1			5	2				7
5			3	6				1
		4	7			2	5	

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	9	7	6	5	3	8	1	2
3	2	6	8	7	1	5	4	9
8	1	5	2	9	4	3	7	6
6	8	2	1	4	5	7	9	3
7	4	9	3	8	6	2	5	1
5	3	1	7	2	9	6	8	4
1	6	3	4	5	7	9	2	8
9	5	8	6	1	2	4	3	7
2	7	4	9	3	8	1	6	5

COMBINE ingredients in a blender

PROCESS ingredients in a blender until frothy.

Pink citrus juice

Preparation 5'

Pour calamondin juice, sugar and water into a blender (see photo). Add grenadine syrup. Process until well combined. Add ice cubes and blend until liquid is frothy (see photo). Pour into tall glasses and serve with straws.

To pick an ham: Pour into a well-iced glass and serve lightly.

Tips for mixers

- Use a fine strainer when squeezing the calamondin to make sure no seeds get into the drink.
- If the calamondin is too sour, add sugar to taste.
- Grenadine syrup has a strong flavor so use sparingly. One tsp is enough to give the drink an attractive pink color (or at most tsp. 1 ½ tsp). Too much of it will make the drink taste like medicine.
- You can buy grenadine syrup in liquor stores.

FINISHED pink citrus juice

Tips for packing 'baon'

IT'S ALMOST SCHOOL time again and with that comes the daily chore of preparing snacks and lunch boxes for kids. Here are some helpful tips to make this task not just easier but also more fun.

- Ask your kids for suggestions so you know exactly what they want to eat.
- Once they suggest something, see how you can turn it into healthier fare. Most likely they won't ask you to prepare vegetables and fruits kinds. Kids are more into pizzas, hot dogs and pasta. But you can sneak in some veggies and fruits without their knowing it. Add chopped carrots to the pasta sauce, for instance. Sprinkle some finely diced green or red bell pepper on the pizza. Simmer cubed honeydew melon or sun-dried tomatoes in between cocktail sticks for dogs.
- Ask your kids to help in the preparation of their own lunch. They're more likely to eat it if they've put some effort into it.
- While soup is a good thing to have, it can be cumbersome to bring and messy to eat. Save the soup for home meals. But if you must pack some soup, use a wide-mouth thermal so that's leak-proof and can preserve the heat. Such jars are available in the home section of supermarkets and in large department stores.
- Before school starts, shop with your kids for some attractive lunch boxes and containers for rice, viands, sandwiches and drinks. As much as possible, don't make them use plastic forks and spoons because these tend to break easily. Besides, since these are disposable, they tend to add to the landfill. Instead, buy inexpensive flatware that can conveniently fit into their lunch box.
- You can personalize the flatware by tying a pretty ribbon on the edges. Or why not have your kids color the handles with their magic markers?
- And for fun, have your kids bring chopped kitchen leftovers instead of fruits and juices.
- If your children used to talk in the morning without eating their breakfast, pre-measure some breakfast cereals in several, table plastic bags. Tuck a spoon into the bag and have some prepared fruit juice ready in a travel mug or tumbler. All they have to do before leaving for school is to grab and go.
- Most of all, while supplies last, try to make your loved ones feel extra special.

Golf tournament raises scholarship funds

THE LOUIS CONON FRIENDSHIP CUP teed off recently at the Tagaytay Midlands Golf Course with 136 players from the corporate and business world.

Robert Coyiuto Jr., Asahi Philippines principal said a staunch advocate of corporate social responsibility, supported the tournament. Asahi Philippines and PSA Gen teamed up up with SM Group of Companies, SM Foundation and Prudential Guarantee & Assurance Inc., in sponsoring the hole-in-one prize from PGAs Asahi Showroom, the Asahi A4.

The tournament, named in honor of the late Louis Conon, a prominent landowner and benefactor, was organized by his friends and colleagues, Manuel Chan and Hans Sy.

His friends saw fit to combine Conon's great love for golf with his legacy of charity by organizing the tournament.

Among those present were Asahi Philippines head Benedicto T. Coyiuto Jr., the Sy family headed by Henry and Felicidad Sy, together with their children Hans and his wife Carol, Tessie Sy-Coson and Husband Sy, Tagaytay Highlands and Belle Corporation's Willy Ocier and Jesse Tan.

Other friends who came to show their support were Johnny Cobankiat, president of Ace Hardware Philippines Inc., Tony Ang, president of Tern Commercial and Industrial Corp., local businessmen of Sandico cousins Mr. Mrs. Rolando Hechanova, chairman and CEO of Splash Corporation.

The tournament raises funds to finance the college education of children of golf caddies. The scholarship grant is managed by the SM Foundation.

AUDI Operations head Benedicto Coyiuto with Hans Sy

SY FAMILY headed by Henry and Felicidad Sy (far left), with Tessie Sy-Coson (standing)

ROBERT Coyiuto Jr. with Henry "Tecong" Sy

Mall expo showcases Filipino inventors

MAJA Perevalski's Soapnuts Concentrate and Bagpiper

BRENDA CASTRO-SANJOT WAS among the first who saw the benefits of herbal teas like Lagundi, Sambong, Bunabo, Ampalaya and Pito Pito through her Rita Ritz line. Plumuli Mojica's Loofa Mitts and Soap Pockets are made from pouch and help prevent skin disease. Dinky Pinamtora has developed organic products for better home care.

Twins Ian Bustamante's Green Mobile Solar Charger uses renewable energy and power that comes from the sun. Helen Villanueva works with her husband on Eco-Homes, while Talino designer Hydee and Solar Hotels. Anthony Leonidas makes water a new fuel source for cars as given with his Water Fuel Cell.

They are among the 25 inventors who

DELMADO Jimenez's Aesthera hair treatment

will be showcasing their interesting and dynamic products in the Filipino Inventors and Young Achievers Exposition from May 15–17 at the fourth level of the SM City North Edsa Annex.

Many of them have won international and local awards, and they will be in the venue to showcase their "breakthrough" products—some of which may soon be on the world. These include Caroline Chan and Ernest Kho with their Edutainment Systems; Ramona Advincula with her Pandoc Herbal Eyedrops and Tea, and the Silvian Rey Group with their Backrest and Booklet Yogurt Ice Cream made from carabao milk. Lucas Lazaro and the Divine Corporation have innovative skin care products.

The exhibit also includes cutting edge products that will make us proud of our Filipino inventors. These include Engr. Raul Obligar with his multipurpose Arc Charcoal Blower, Antonio Andres with his Mini Fire Truck, and Engr. Johnny Simon with his Per Tau Oil and Some Oil Fuel additive to enhance engine performance. Dalmacio Herring's Ambient Pest Messenger Mat is a never refreshing, while Engineer Pratile Rivera's Acoustic Medical Lens helps treat health problems.

Other inventors and their inventions include Sonia de Leon and her Deep Fryer, Felix Villoria and his Disinfecting Powder, Isolene and Shampoo, Rodolfo Rivera Flat Iron Ironomic and so on. Further, Virgilio Saugaten's Eggshell Protector and Water Saver Isolator, Christine Layaoen's Incubator for Ostrich, and the Philippine Science High School's Robotics.

In addition to the exhibits, the event will also have three special art activities so that they can share the talent, sensitivity and skills of young Filipinos who also went to join. These include Recycling Magic using recycled materials on May 15; Heal a Vision, wherein eye care specialists train the kids on May 16; and Ride on Art Contest on May 17. All events will take place at the second level of the mall.

The Filipino Inventors and Young Achievers Exposition is one of the many exciting events at SM City North Edsa.

PLANTER home care products by Dinky Pinamtora

MEMBERS Mojica's creations

PAINTERS Dilucel Green Oil fuel additives by Engr. Johnny Simon

hp PRINT RELENTLESSLY

GET 2.4 TIMES* MORE PRINTS THAN REFILLED INKS.

Original HP Inks give you more. More value and lifelike colors. They won't leak, damage the printheads, fail prematurely, or come "dead on arrival." But 1 in 5 refilled inks,* lined with 2.4 times more prints than refills,* you can save cost without compromising quality and reliability. Trust Original HP Inks.

WIN A SHOPPING SPREE plus other GREAT PRIZES in the HP 2.4 MILLION SHOPPING BONUS

The Shopping Bonus
Register your unit get a chance to be one of the ten lucky winners of a Shopping Spree at Hunter's Department Store.

Instant-Win Prizes
Look for the scratch card on the product pack. Register your special code online and you may instantly win mobile load.

Earn Points and Redeem Gifts
Redeem your points to win in Bodacho GCs, HP Printers and an HP Mini 1000.

To win, buy your inks now and register at www.hp.com/ph/getmoreprints/pr. Search "HP Inks" online for more details.

Choose from the Original HP Inks portfolio.

HP Standard Inks
HP High-capacity (XL) Inks
HP Multi-pack Inks

Visit: www.hp.com/ph/getmoreprints/pr
Call: 1-800-1441-4488 or +(632) 867 3551
Email: ph_contact@hp.com

©2009 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. *Based on 3rd party testing, commissioned by HP, done by TÜV SÜD PSB on 12x7 Networks Comparison Study Asia Pacific ink cartridges tested HP, TRA, TU, & XT. Full report available at http://www.tuv-sud.sg/report/hp/inkcomparison

*Terms and conditions apply. Valid September 15, 2009 inclusive and Subject to SM Retail Terms. Visit www.sm.com.ph

LIFESTYLE Home&Entertaining

Five-star homes for on-the-go sophisticates

Ascott Singapore is offering posh prizes and treats on its 25th year

By Rowena C. Burgos

"NOT A FIVE-STAR HOTEL. A FIVE-STAR home."

The Ascott's serviced residences have embraced that tagline wholeheartedly and is living it, says Gerald Lee, chief executive officer of Ascott, Ayala Land's (the hospitality management arm of The Ascott Group Limited.

Ascott is the world's largest international serviced residence owner-operator, with over 18,000 residence units in Asia Pacific, Europe and the Gulf region, as well as about

FIVE-STAR F3

ASCOTT Singapore Raffles Place one-bedroom kitchen

ASCOTT Raffles Place master bedroom

CITADINES breakfast lounge

Five-star homes for on-the-go sophisticates

From page F1

7,000 units which are under development.

The company operates three brands: Ascott, Somerset and Citadines. Roughly-sized residences in Singapore, Ascott is a wholly owned subsidiary of CapitaLand Limited, one of Asia's largest real estate companies.

Singapore Raffles Place

Travellers who stay in Ascott Singapore Raffles Place, Ascott's premier flagship serviced residence in Singapore, are ensconced in its rich heritage as the former Asia Insurance Building. Architect Ann's tallest building in the 1960s, its conservation and restoration cost $100 million.

The original Annie Carlin-designed lions and chrome handrails are preserved. Cubic sets an American designer and architect who invented the mail chute in the 1880s, where mail could be dropped from a high point and collected at a central depository. The mail chute was restored in 2005.

The Art Deco-inspired Ascott also retained more than 500 brass window frames and replaced seven 1,000 glass panels as protection against the sun and city traffic. Some 20,000 pieces of original Travertine marble cladding were hand-restored.

Ascott also conserved the feature main of Siena Fantasy Italian marble around the perimeter of the building, and Fair Siena Sienna pillars at the front of the property. Two inlaid plaques were set here—in 1953 to commemorate the coronation of the Queen of England, and in 1953 for the official opening of Asia Insurance Building.

Each of the property's 146 residences is adorned with contemporary paintings by leading Asian artists. Apartments feature an inland bed and sound in the bathroom, which has Bilston Bliss and a finely equipped Guggenus kitchen.

The property also has fully equipped boardrooms, video conferencing facilities, Wi-Fi connectivity and full secretarial support. To relax, residents can retire to the facility's pool, work out in the gym or enjoy the rooftop Jacuzzi.

The fine dining restaurant and wine bar is helmed by chef Julien Bompard. Other services offered are babysitting, grocery shopping, 24-hour concierge, airport transfer, courier and complimentary DVD library.

Ascott Singapore Raffles Place is located at No. 2 Finlayson Green, Singapore. Call (65) 6877 3000, fax (65) 6877 3666.)

Citadines

Citadines Singapore Mount Sophia, on the other hand, opened its doors last January. The 154-unit Citadines is located in the Bras Basah-Bugis area.

ASCOTT Singapore Raffles Place

CITADINES Singapore Mount Sophia

GERALD Lee, chief executive officer of Ascott Hospitality

ASCOTT Raffles Place suite

ASCOTT Singapore Raffles Place lobby

ASCOTT Raffles Place one-bedroom bedroom

ASCOTT Raffles Place entrance

ASCOTT Raffles Place exterior

JULIEN Bompard restaurant and wine bar at Ascott Raffles Place

The club living space doubles as a home office with broadband access, fully equipped kitchen and expansive living room. Bedroom linens, bathroom toiletries, telephone facility with IDD service and weekly cleaning services are provided.

The studio apartments also have a home entertainment system with LCD TV that can slide on the wall to allow viewing from the living area or bedroom. There is also a fitness centre and lounge in the residence.

Office services include Wi-Fi, daily cleaning, dry cleaning, laundry, car park and limo complimentary breakfast.

Citadines started operations in Europe in 1984. Ascott acquired the brand in 2004 and brought it to Asia in 2006.

Currently, there are 11 operating Citadines in Asia. Apartments range from deluxe to premier layouts of studio, one-or two-bedroom apartments.

Promos

To commemorate its 25th anniversary, Ascott offers customers who have stayed at Ascott's participating properties between January and December monthly rewards of free stays and 25 percent off rates in over 25 cities each month.

The series of promotions and rewards is ongoing and valid throughout the year.

The top reward is a complimentary three-night stay every year for the next 25 consecutive years to one lucky customer. The deal, worth up to A$100,000, can be used at any of Ascott's serviced residences worldwide.

ASCOTT Raffles Place voice-motif from Asia Insurance Building adapted as air-con grille design

From April to December, one guest will be picked every month to enjoy a three-night stay on the house.

Ascott also offers 25 percent off its Best Available Rates to customers who make a booking of up to seven nights.

Extended-stay guests who make bookings for one month or more will receive a complimentary night for each month of stay, up to seven free nights. Guests can redeem their free nights to stay in over property worldwide.

"Over the 25 years, Ascott has set industry benchmarks with the launch of several firsts," said Ginang Tee Heng, CEO of Ascott Real Estate, and centre area of The Ascott Group Limited.

"Besides pioneering the serviced residence concept, Ascott launched the world's first pan-Asian serviced residence and secure investment trust, Ascott Residence Trust, in 2006. We are the largest international serviced residence operator in most countries where we operate, including China, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines and France. We will continue to expand our presence to more cities to further strengthen Ascott's leadership."

For more information on the promotions, terms and conditions and reservations, visit www.the-ascott.com, 32homereserve, or call Global Reservations at (65) 6725-7272, or contact Deborah Galang, marketing manager at +61 (0)2 9299 4999, e-mail deborah.galang@the-ascott.com.

Try the P20 refrigerator test

WITH P20, YOU CAN FIND out if your refrigerator's door seal is as tight as it should be. That is much, much cheaper than getting a technician to look at your refrigerator.

THE CONSUMER
Linda B. Bolido

Electrolux, the appliance manufacturer, says the P20 bill is the kind of paper you need to conduct the test. Actually, any peso bill or paper of the same thickness will do, but Electrolux assumes P20 is more readily available in most households.

Simply close the door on a peso bill. If the paper is held tightly in place, there is no problem with your refrigerator's seal. If the paper falls off, you need to call a technician to adjust the door or replace the seal.

Making sure your refrigerator is tightly sealed will help reduce your electricity consumption and save you money. A door that does not close tightly lets the cold air escape, making the appliance work harder to maintain the right temperature inside. This will mean greater electricity consumption.

Electrolux offers other suggestions to help make sure your refrigerator is energy-efficient:

- Always set the temperature in the right level. Consult the user manual to check the manufacturer's recommendation.
- Do not overfill the refrigerator so as not to block air circulation. But a freezer performs better when full than when empty.
- Clean the coils at the back and air intake grill below the door or doors every three months.
- Keep refrigerators and freezers away from direct sunlight and make sure there is at least 5 cm of space all around to allow heat to escape from the compressor and condensing coil.
- Allow hot food to cool before storing in the refrigerator.

As for keeping that old, inefficient refrigerator as a cooler for drinks, Electrolux does not think is a good idea. It will only cost you thousands of pesos in additional energy consumption.

Tips for washing machine use

Electrolux suggests using cold water, as much as possible, for washing clothes.

"A whopping 85-90 percent of the energy used by washing machines is for heating the water," it says. Hot water also shrinks and weakens your clothes much more quickly and makes colors fade faster.

Since most Filipinos change clothes often and do not really get them very dirty, there is very rarely a need for thorough cleansing with hot water. The humidity makes people change clothes every day, even twice or more a day.

Electrolux also suggests that the washing machine be run only with full loads as much as possible, but should not be overloaded. For those who want to conserve not only energy but water too, Electrolux makes a pitch for its front-loading washing machines.

"Front-loading clothes washers... use roughly half the water per load, and are more effective at squeezing the water out of the clothes," which means they will dry much more quickly.

The company also says clothes washed in front-loading washers "last longer because they are gently tumbled rather than twisted around an agitator."

As for electric dryers, hanging the clothes outside where it is exposed to sun and wind is, of course, the better option. Drying clothes under the rain, which is use most days in this tropical country does not only save energy but also gives clothes a much cleaner and fresher smell.

But for those who have to use dryers because they do not have the space for drying clothes the natural way, Electrolux offers some suggestions to reduce energy consumption:

- Make sure clothes are otherwise wring before they are put in the dryer.
- Separate loads into heavy, medium and lightweight items. Lighter loads take less drying time than a mixture of items.
- Dry consecutive loads to use heat generated by the previous load.
- Clean the lint filter after every load. Electrolux says a clogged filter can increase energy use up to 30 percent, and may be a fire hazard.)

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, PhilippineDaily Inquirer, 10/F Chino Roces Ave. cor. Ricardo and Sipac St., 1204 Makati City; fax 8174703-04; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph.

THESE colorful red and yellow lights from Akari are not only energy-saving but also water-proof.

COMPACT fluorescent bulbs are more than CFLEX® and GE Edison are at least two times more energy than standard incandescent lamps.

Earth-friendly home tips

ACE HARDWARE SUGGESTS simple ways to celebrate Earth Day everyday. You can make your home more energy-friendly by making the right choices when you shop using the rules-free, non-toxic, and lead-free. ACE Paints for your home; replacing your light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs or CFLs; and going natural with your cleaning by using biodegradable cleaners.

You can get great savings on ACE Hardware paints, enamel sprays, accessories and tools.

ACE Hardware stores are located at: SM Makati, SM Cubao, SM Megamall, SM South, SM City Marikina, SM City San Lazaro, SM City Manila, and the SM Mall of Asia as well as Supermarkets in Ortigas and Alabang; in the provincial areas, there are located at the 3M Supermalls in Baguio, Dagupan, Malolos, Batangas, Lucena, Clark, Marikina, Batangas, Bacolod, Iloilo and Sta. Rosa in Laguna; as well as Cebu, Iloilo, Davao and Cagayan de Oro in the Visayas area.

CFLEX's circular lamp can give up to 75-percent savings on electricity bills.

THIS Akari 3-watt candle-type bulb can last up to 6,000 hours.

THE TURTLE Zip Wax self-drying wash and wax for cars has two layers. The top layer has wax protection with a self-drying formula, while the wash-bottom layer has special biodegradable cleaning agents. Together they form a super-foaming wash that leaves a high-gloss, streak-free shine.

SIMPLE Green Multi-Purpose Cleaners not only clean tough stains, but are also free from bleaches, alcohol and ammonia. Available in several scents like Orange, Apple and Floral, these deodorize as well as clean.

ACE PAINTS like these with Hi Gloss and Semi-Gloss finishes are lead-free, odorless and non-toxic.

DAVIES Star Proof is 100-percent acrylic, odorless, anti-bacterial paint with no added lead or mercury.

THAI-GE Edison 60-watt energy-saving bulb has a safety base for extra protection and a spiral tube for better light distribution.

MANHATTAN Heights is the new phase of the bestselling Manhattan Garden City project at Megaworld's Araneta Center.

Megaworld launches third phase of Manhattan Garden City

Leading property developer Megaworld Corporation has launched the third phase of one of its trendsetting township projects, Manhattan Garden City.

Dubbed Manhattan Heights, the new phase will feature an additional four towers. Manhattan Heights will add more than 1,000 units to Manhattan Garden City. The first tower will have 406 residential units; all feature two-rooms. Unit prices start at P2.5 million for a studio, P3.7M for a 1-bedroom and P5.1Mfor a 2-bedroom suite.

Manhattan Heights will be located across Ali Mall, where a transport terminal is now located. The site along Gen. Romulo Ave. gives residents easy access to Aurora Boulevard and EDSA via P. Tuazon Boulevard.

With Manhattan Heights' connection to the other parts of Manhattan Garden City through garden walkways and footpaths, residents will enjoy unprecedented mobility. All they need to do is board the LRT3 and MRT3, which meet at the Araneta Center, to reach any point of the metro within minutes.

To maintain Manhattan Garden City's claim as to having the most number of amenities, the country's #1 residential condominium developer is planning more than 20 new amenities for Manhattan Heights. These boost the previously announced high concentration of amenities in Manhattan Garden City's first two phases.

Passive amenities at Manhattan Heights include skylights, sitting areas and garden decks. Active amenities also abound, such as a jogging path, adult and kiddie pools and a playground.

A sky garden at the four topmost floors of each tower differentiates Manhattan Heights among the modern buildings within Araneta Center. While being an aesthetic feature, the sky garden also has the environment for its designs.

The green rooftop development concept employed at the fourth floor podium deck is aimed at lowering the levels of pollution, while the sky garden's plant life also cleanses the air and reduces heat stress, high above the metro.

To know more about Manhattan Heights, please call 810-3333 or check out the Manhattan Garden City showroom at the 3rd level of Gateway Mall. Or visit www.themanhattangardencity.com.

THE environment-friendly sky garden is a unique feature of each residential tower at Manhattan Heights.

BOBBY Dy, head of Ayala Land Premier, and Tere Mirasol, head of Ayala Land Premier Sales

Designer homes with customized options

AYALA WESTPORT PREMIER recently launched The Crestwood, its first house-and-lot offering, which is designed to fit every neighborhood of contrasted, high-end homes and suit the standards of its affluent clientele.

Three model homes, designed by architect Conrad Onglao, show a myriad of options to fit each person's unique tastes and design sensibilities.

Perfumes and aromas wrapped in fabrics and leather offer potential homeowners a glimpse into the many visual possibilities that unique homes can bring, floating the breeze. Cafe Blossom provided the day's buffet lunch.

Guests' children were then hard at ceramic and tile painting and picture frame decorating.

A tour of The Crestwood's model units was also part of the day's festivities. Within the day, several homes had been ordered and booked.

Experience firsthand how you can make your own mark on bespoke designer homes offered at The Crestwood. Walk through the 280-, 275- and 300-sq m Cypress, Linnet and Olive model units, and feel the drama of multilevel space, sample the luxury outlook and rolling hills of Ayala Westgrove Heights.

Call 848-5000, e-mail info@ayalalandpremier.com or visit www.ayalalandpremier.com.

THE CORNUS Onglao-designed homes in Crestwood feature high ceilings, large windows and ample space for entertaining.

"Whatever your lifestyle, Doña Maria will make you fall in love with rice."

Editor Bernie G. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

Watch short fun SHOCKING SAYINGS, sent to 2920 for Globe, Sun REGISTER DASHING and 8-2780 for Smart | E-mail: entertainment@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

The wedding dress

GORGEOUS Sunshine is set to move with Bryan Jones' designer Cary Santiago in Cebu to discuss details of (Sunshine's) wedding dress, said a close friend of the broadcaster's who requested anonymity. Sunshine, recently engaged to Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago's son Mikee Cojuangco Jaworski, will leave By to Zoom to make arrangements for orchids and plants for the wedding and reception, added the source. Marinel R. Cruz

CHEER FACTOR

Why Allison finally answered back

By Nestor M. Enerdio

THE LAST GIRL ON "AMERICAN IDOL" Season 8, 17-year-old Allison Iraheta, was booted last week during "Rock Night" results, leaving three guys in the battle for one of the world's most hotly contested talent titles.

Ironically, her strongest suit was rock music and, understandably, she was one of the judges' obvious favorites...but Allison—we text packing after she earned mixed reviews for her version of Janis Joplin's "Cry Baby." Paula Abdul called her "downright fearless" but other three judges faulted the red-haired singer for poor song choice.

"I don't regret anything I did in the show. It definitely had to be about me feeling the song," Allison said in an interview arranged by Sun World, which airs the program in the Philippines.

Simon often said you lacked personality in your final week, you answered back. What prompted that?

I was like, "Okay Simon, I'm really not the kind (of) like Jack Sparrow I respect you," (but throughout the show he was like, "Stare hugging." I just thought, "You know what, that's it?" It was the perfect time to stand up for myself. I was like, "I'm not who you say I are. I'm not boring. And if you say I don't talk, then I might as well just talk."

After Danny Gokey's "Dream On" debacle, and the takeaways review that Kris Allen received, did you expect you'd be safe?

I'd been in the bottom three so many times, I was prepared for anything. But I'm happy that I made it this far.

You got a lot of flak about things that had nothing to do with your singing, like fashion choices and hairstyles. Was that annoying?

Sort of. I was like, "Come on...I'm singing here!" (I knew) I took a lot of risks in the way I dressed, but I had fun with that, too.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Like you, Chris Daughtry finished fourth in the competition. Does his success inspire you?

Totally. He's done so well, even though he didn't make it all the way in the top. It gives me a chance. Hopefully, I hope I do as well as he does.

After the tour, will you head back to high school?

I miss home schooled, so I was doing a lot of things ahead of time. I'm almost done with school. Right now I really want to continue with the "Idol" school. It's so much fun and I have a great teacher.

With only three singers remaining, who are you going to tell people to vote for?

They've got to vote for whoever they think is awesome. This competition is so crazy because everybody is so different. If you find someone you totally connect to, vote for him.

"American Idol" Season 8 airs Tue-Wednesday and Thursday, 8 p.m., on Star World (and QTV) with same-night replays at (time) 11 p.m.

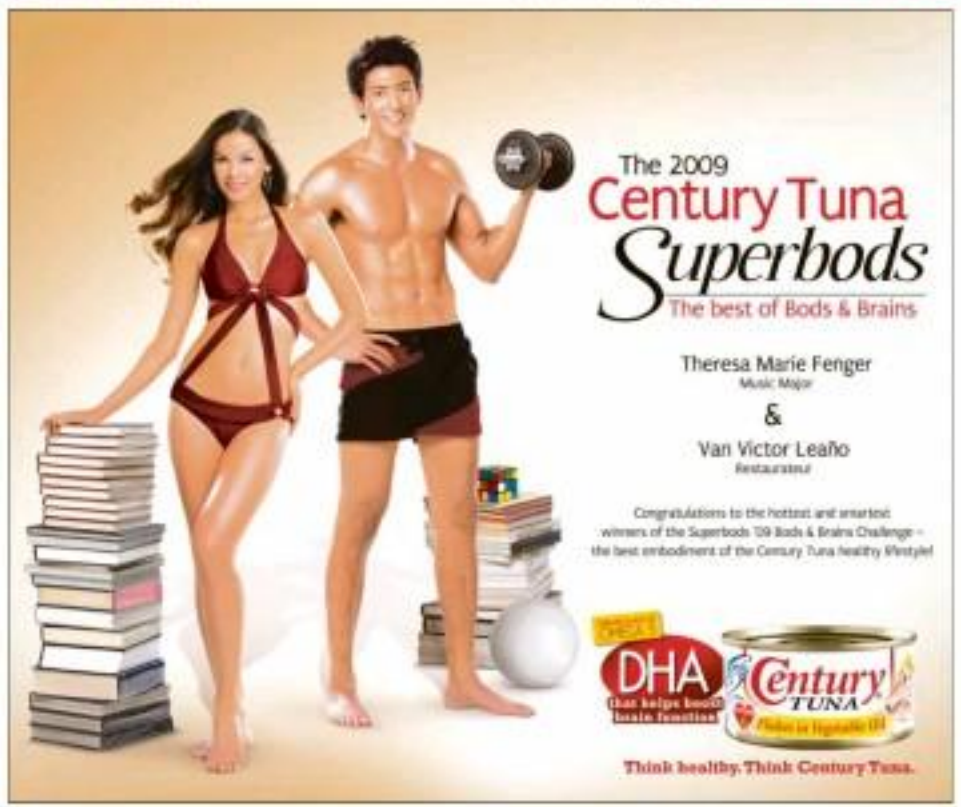
Korina 'not replaced'

KORINA SANCHEZ HAS BID goodbye to audiences of her Teleradyo show on dzMM and the late-night news program, "Bandila."

Cris Ocillos and Jessy Urraza Diaz will stay as "Bandila" anchors, corporate communications head Bong Osorio said. "Korina will not be replaced."

Her slumps were made in dzMM's programming to fill in the 6:30-10:30 slot of Sanchez and Ted Failon's (also on leave), daily show, "Tutukang Failon at Sanchez." Osorio said "Tito Per Ono," hosted by Anthony Taberna and Ginoy Baka, were slot from 7:30 to 9:30. A new

ENTERTAINMENT



Her sister's keeper

JENNYLYN MERCADO

ANGEL LOCSIN'S SISTER, ELA Colmenares, warns Netizens about fake websites claiming to be her sibling's. One site tells fans to "write back in Tagalog because Angel ain't fluent in English." A Multiply account even asks bloggers for money.

Colmenares says the star's official site is www.angellocsin.com.ph, and adds, "My sister's site doesn't charge anything and promises only her pre-season...women's and children's rights."

Where's Jennylyn?

Maybe science Jennylyn Mercado has been winning for two days. Her child's show up on the great evidences for her concern and was TV guesting over the weekend.

Manager Becky Aguila is still at a loss, but a source told Bandera that Mercado got in touch with the executive producer of her afternoon soap, "Sisid Sa ang Mangarap" on Sunday.

"Jen said she'd report for the next taping (Monday)," told a source. "Perhaps she just got burned out," shrugged.

Producer/precarer

Mayor Pandacan could rewrite "How to Succeed in the Movie Business Without Really Trying."

To climb a lucrative deal with Hollywood Bigshot, MP pulled out all the stops when DR visited SB. A spy says MP wined and dined SB and even gifted the guy 10 bottles Cosa Hunk.

MP is known to provide big name foreign visitors and hard bodies with female and male companions, says another source. Uh-oh.

Insecure host in trouble

The likely reason that TV Host is hesitating with colleagues, Network insider says, is that two of TV's new programs are not saring well.

Painful proof of this is the fact that Former Friend opted to make a long awaited appearance on another program with a bigger audience share. So wonder TH is saring up.

To be or not to be ... sacked

Expect denials to follow at once. Still ghosted Network Wide Station chat

Studio Exec was sacked for failing to produce deliverables. At least three

shows under SE are languishing in development hell, re-

RUSHES

ending up in Inner One run up to millions.

Another source claims SE was simply transferred to another post. But that looks more like a demotion, spoke yes another snide.

Incorrigible flirt

Bb Estelle surmises that Gorgeous Hunk isn't really bisexual, he is actually pansexual.

"He's an incorrigible flirt," asserts BJ. "He is addicted to attention and can't help charming anyone—male, female, gay or straight." Calling Dr. Maggie Holmes.

* * *

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed last week's gaffefest on TV, (And why we are amused, if we are anyway.)

• Asian do Rebu, on accepting her first Emmy award after seven years:

"Sobrang nagsisisi yung puyat. I was very honest with them, so my biggest problem is the schedule. Then I talked to my kids. Sabi nung... nagsisi na akin, ma, dun." (Almost there.)

• Jasmin on the reported wedding plans of ex-spouse John Estrada and his girlfriend Priscilla Meirelles:

"Hindi, okay pakialam ako." (Good answer.) Or Priscilla: "Siyempre nakaka-excite naman kasi, okay lang. Ang hindi maitsi' sa mga anak ko, ayaw pa ring magpa-ano." (Diba-ano.)

• Quink Gonzalez, asked about a possible reconciliation between ex-wife Dawn and her ex, Hayden Kho:

"Ayaw-ayaw nung naghihintay na hindi." (Inintay?)

• Kristel Yllana, asked about a previous statement that he'll go back to Abs's arms, given the chance:

"Hindi ... mamimi [mem] kaming bagong pinagkasunduan, ang natutunan namin natuto ng maging magkaanib kami talaga." (Seriously?)

• Joyce Jimenez, asked about infidelity/cheating:

"Dahilanduan ... siyempre may pinaka-pwning factor na natutulisan you don't feel the love by (moving) ... but I think I'm just scared I won't be a good mother." (Pointing-pwning?)

• Pinky Coseta, on leaving home after a squabble with mom over OP Live Hot:

Nakakapagtampo-yung dark, pero Long mahaba mga laang gagawin kami akay ... I feel sad to bitch niya: natitiis yan. Pinanindot ng pala." (Hey, that's mean.)

• Lunch reaction:

"I'm hurt because I always ask them the chance to manjokbala ko yung sarili ko as Armie." (Take it slow, girl.)

• Rosita Noodles, on her upcoming wedding to Sen. Mar Roxas:

"It will be soonest than later." (Eh, that helps.)

• Liz Uy, on John Lloyd Cruz asking a question about a supposed breakup:

"Eh si in New York and I want to enjoy my time in Paris." (Sori?)

• Pulis Gutierrez, admitting she's not on speaking terms with ocon Aunaluchie:

"Ma, I love you ... I'm still your little girl." (Awww.)

• Director Cruz, on "lying" about the nature of her relationship with 4C Montemayor on a talk show's fat detector test:

"I am not going to explain anything. It's Mother's Day." (Hahaha, the best!)

With Gerry Nuera (Darnell), Emerson Abe, Ma Ross, Showbiz Central

Francine calling for blood donors

By Hazel R. Cruz

ACTRESS FRANCINE PRIETO, WHOSE mom Amy has been diagnosed with ovarian cancer, said the Grady-celebrated Mother's Day will be dinner at home.

"Mommy just had her first round of chemotherapy. We couldn't risk exposing her to germs," Francine told Inquirer Entertainment on Sunday.

Francine said doctors at Cardinal Santos Medical Center in San Juan told them the next session on May 5. Amy, 53, was taken to the hospital a week before due to abdominal discomfort. They confirmed that the cancer is in the third stage.

Because of her low hemoglobin count, Amy needs a blood transfusion before each chemo session. Blood donations may be brought to the CMMC, under the name Imelda Baron.

"My mom cried when she learned, and I understand how scared she is," Francine said. "Her mother died of ovarian cancer, and only recently, my dad, because of colon cancer."

The actress said Amy needs an operation to remove a cervical tumor. Meanwhile, "Mommy is trying to cope with the effects of chemo. I told her that we'll do everything to make her feel comfortable. She said she wasn't too concerned about herself and that she was worried about us, her kids."

Francine added: "It's really praying that she doesn't lose her hair because of chemotherapy. Going to the beauty salon a lot favorite relaxation."

Baron just 'on loan,' still a Kapamilya

CONTRARY TO RUMORS, BARON Geisler is not moving to GMA 7. "I think [people] are lying also to ABS," he clarifies, "so-in some episodes of a drama special, 'ABS Cinemanood' ya ano."

Doesn't he feel pressured to outdo himself after reaping awards for his superb performance in Joy? "Siyempre all, because I love my job," he says. "Sarado ang reality a bukas."

And just like his career, Baron's love life is in full bloom. "Tinawan talaga ako Ary Rachel [Stephenson]," he tells us. "I hadn't felt this way since my relationship with Jodi [Sta. Maria]. Even if Chele lives in Australia, we chat online for hours daily. Thank God for technology. Imagine if we're not each other enough. It's hard to have a long distance relationship. Ang sa akin lang, long depot. Our sweet moments make the long wait worth it."

Looks like the hurtful issues would need less alcohol now that he's in control of self-love.

No comment

I entered Kanjelle and asked if she's happy about the breakup of her ex-flingding Dennis' warm-up with Marian Rivera. "I'd rather not comment about that," it said. "It's almost mid-year and I'm sure that changes." But in she ready to fall again? "Love will come," she quips, "when it's time."

For now, her heart seems to be exclusive to meds.

Great feedback

Carmina Villaroel is overwhelmed by the great feedback she got for her performance in "Madrasta Mo Kaya."

"I enjoyed doing drama," she says. "I grew up in ABS-CBN. It's always fun working with them."

Does it signal her return to the Kapamilya network?

"Nope. I'm staying with GMA," she clarifies. "With my hosting, my schedule is tight. But I hope GMA will give me a drama project soon."

Is she willing to work with her ex, Bamam who has since transformed into BB Gandanghari? "We're okay," she quips. "But I won't answer so long about a project with him."

Carmi Martin would rather not do a "Madrasta Mo Kaya" if the Ramon Padilla episode is her life.

Guess he

Staying on out-of-town event, a drunk young actress hanged into the room of a young actor. She started blabbering, "spoke-ess talaga sa show-biz. Hi-nap, parent na lang mahi-chismis. Actress ako, you know. Small my hands. Di ko away marijuana?"

The actor was flabbergasted. Who he erased from deep to listen to her ravings? Looks like it's the young actress who needs to "wake up."

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

BARON Geisler with girlfriend Rachel Stephenson

Travel sweet

Since I frequent Boracay, my sichin of choice is Cebu Pacific. They fly from Manila to Boracay twice daily (sometimes panthree-one). Most of the time, their flights arrive ahead of schedule.

And traveling just got sweeter with the Cebu Pacific go every flight 168 Mas 1G. The like-sized donuts were with a medley of flavors exclusively created for CP (Choco Mocha, Strawberry Theff and Rainbow Drop). I just couldn't stop munching on them. Cebu Pacific works!

Kapamilya fiesta

The Kapamilya celebrations of the Second Festival at the Second Studios began with a Little Miss Lisa by contest. The winners were crowned by Mr Marlin Gingal of the Public Information Office and Isabel Silva, ABS-CBN Recruitment manager.

A more grown-up Making Mistakes reminded the little girls dressed in Mr Lemonar fashion. Chokoleit, who did not allow grief over his recent severe death to show, brought the house down with his performance.

Miss Gandis capped the fun event with his home-dancing and home-playing with the crowd. Live coverage of the festival were broadcast worldwide through ABS-CBN Standard TV channel 9700 or 9700 101 5 Mhz. Yes la Fiesta sila fa parehe!

PERSONAL: Happy Birthday to the force behind fireworks, its managing director Donna Sheraton Cando. Congrats to Tito Oneld and Tito Gerdie for their 37 masterpiece Relatch Day future problem.

E-mail: wow@philstar.com

CLICK!

Wedding bells and one death

STUDIO 23 PRAISES the much-awaited wedding of Meredith Grey (Ellen Pompeo) and Derek Shepard (Patrick Dempsey) on "Grey's Anatomy" on May 25 at 8 p.m.

The episode is titled, "What a Difference a Day Makes."

On "Desperate Housewives," Mike'le Lane is still in shock because of the sudden death of Edie Britt (Nicollette Sheridan). Tomorrow at 9 p.m., the women look back on Edie's kind's life. Susan recalls their first meeting; Lynette, a memorable, after-noon tea; Bree, the thoughtfulness that Edie showed Gaby, a night of friendly competition.

Q11 website

Q Channel 11 recently launched its new website, PUMPjak, which offers regular updates on, and highlights from, Q programs. It is also an interactive portal that features women issues.

PUMPjak is powered by GMA New Media Inc.

OPENING TODAY

Al Al delos Alas, John Estrada and Sharon Cuneta

BFF: Best Friends Forever

Sharon Cuneta, Al Al delos Alas, John Estrada, Glaiza Pareño, Chokoleit, Ivy Meñez, directed by Wenn V. Deramas

A comedy-in-series (Cuneta) befriends a belly-dancing teacher (De los Alas) and they discover that they love the same man (Estrada). The Mother's Day presentation of Star Cinema brings together the studio's two strongest box-office stars. Drumbeaters say that when Cuneta first read the script, she kept laughing. De los Alas says that sharing the screen with the Megastar is "an honor and a dream come true."

Ip Man

Starr Donnie Yen, Zhi Hui, Xu Tang Lun, Simon Yam, Ye Ling, Gia Gong Fan; directed by Wilson Yip

Biopic of Ip Man, Wing Chun master and Bruce Lee's teacher [Yen], chronicles his struggles during the Japanese occupation of China. Twitch.com recommends the "intensively designed . . . varied martial arts sequences." Agrees Adam Wing of 24Frames.typepad.com: "Poetic choreography by Sammo Hung is sublime throughout." Rongfan.com calls it "gripping and action-packed . . . rapid-fire and astounding."

Angels & Demons

Starr Tom Hanks, Ewan McGregor, Ayelet Zurer, Stellan Skarsgaard; directed by Ron Howard

The Vatican vaults is sealed upon Robert Langdon (Hanks) to unravel the mystery of an ancient fraternity called the Illuminati. Sidney Sheng of The Hollywood Reporter thinks the "violent, occult thriller delivers as promised." Mike Goodridge of Screen International points out: Ewan-ger, Howard "does a far more job than ... or. "The Da Vinci Code." Immanuel Levy describes it as "hammy & improbable." Opens Friday.

IT'S DO OR DIE.

Just a week before the GRAND FINALS. Now's their last chance to show the world what they've got.

American Idol

SEASON 8

Performance Night 8:00PM • Replay 8:30PM

Results tomorrow 8:00PM • Replay 8:30PM

DON'T MISS THE GRAND FINALS!
Performance night May 20 8:00PM
REPLAY 8:30PM

Results May 21
LIVE VIA SATELLITE 8:00AM
Primetime telecast 7:30PM

Channel 11

CLEAR

S-T.A. LUCIA EAST GRAND MALL

THEATRE

LITSONERO
X-MEN:WOLVERINE
GHOST of GIRLFRIENDS PAST
DESTINEERS FOREVER
DEDNA SI LOLO
IP MAN
STARTREK
DESTINEERS FOREVER
X-MEN:WOLVERINE

POWER PLANT MALL

X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE – P521
STAR TREK XI: THE FUTURE BEGINS – E
X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE – P521
BFF: DESTINEERS FOREVER
GHOSTS OF GIRL FRIENDS PAST – P521
STAR TREK XI: THE FUTURE BEGINS – E

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 STAR TREK 3D
2 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
3 STAR TREK 3D
4 STAR TREK 3D
BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

Holy Mass Celebration at the Shang

Saturdays, 6pm
Sundays, 11am & 6pm

Shangri-La Plaza

SM CINEMA

www.smcinema.com

SM CINEMA CINEXCLUSIVE

SHOWING EXCLUSIVELY AT SM CINEMAS MAY 20

METRO MANILA

RESERVED SEATS NOW AVAILABLE

THE PODIUM

X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE

STAR TREK

LATE SCREENINGS

IMAX

STAR TREK

MONSTERS VS ALIENS

STAR TREK

CINEMA 1

X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE

LUZON

OPENING ON MAY 15

VISAYAS • MINDANAO

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS NOW ACCEPTED IN ALL SM CINEMA BRANCHES

THE NEW DIGITAL CINEMA MEGAMALL

GIVES ITS MOVIEGOERS A SPECIAL OFFER

BUY 2 TICKETS TO ANY MOVIE AT THE NEW DIGITAL CINEMA MEGAMALL (CINEMA 1)

GET AN EXECUTIVE OFFICIAL SC WORTH P1,000

BUY 4 TICKETS TO ANY MOVIE AT THE NEW DIGITAL CINEMA MEGAMALL (CINEMA 1)

GET 1 SHISEIDO SUNGLASSES

CINEMA ACCESS: 395-5555

MOVIEWORLD

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMA MOVIE GUIDE

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
2 17 AGAIN
3 THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT
4 IP MAN
5 BFF
6 STAR TREK
7 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
8 DED NA SI LOLO
9 HEAVENLY TOUCH
10 GHOSTS OF GIRLFRIENDS PAST

ERMITA

1 AMUSEMENT
2 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
3 STAR TREK
4 IP MAN
5 GHOSTS OF GIRLFRIENDS PAST
6 DED NA SI LOLO
7 BFF

METRO EAST

1 IP MAN
2 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
3 BFF
4 STAR TREK
5 THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT
6 GHOSTS OF GIRLFRIENDS PAST
7 BFF
8 DED NA SI LOLO

NOVALICHES

1 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
2 STAR TREK
3 BFF
4 HEAVENLY TOUCH

PIONEER

1 AMUSEMENT
2 GHOSTS OF GIRLFRIENDS PAST
3 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
4 STAR TREK

SINE DIREK

Ded na si Lolo

NOW SHOWING

MOVIEWORLD

STA. ROSA

1 STAR TREK
2 BFF
3 SUPER TYPHOON
4 FRIDAY THE 13TH

LIPA

1 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
2 BFF
3 THE HAUNTING IN CONNECTICUT
4 SUPER TYPHOON

DASMARINAS

1 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
2 STAR TREK
3 THE UNBORN
4 BFF

IMUS

1 BFF
2 IP MAN
3 STAR TREK
4 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE

ANGELES

1 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
2 BFF
3 SUPER TYPHOON
4 STAR TREK

STARMILLS

1 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
2 STAR TREK
3 BFF
4 BFF
5 SUPER TYPHOON
6 CRANK 2

BACOLOD

1 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
2 HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU
3 BFF
4 CRANK 2
5 HEAVENLY TOUCH
6 FAST & FURIOUS 4

ILOILO

1 STAR TREK
2 CRANK 2
3 17 AGAIN
4 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
5 BFF
6 HEAVENLY TOUCH

NOW SHOWING

MOVIEWORLD

WIN COOL STAR TREK MOVIE PREMIUMS!

Way to go, Judy Ann and Ryan

MANY CELEBRITY WEDDINGS are played for all of the glitz and glitter they're worth, with big bang material stars, multiple seasons and, literally, a cast of hundreds. So **their** candid, **Ryan Agoncillo** and his bride **Judy Ann Santos** recently "eloped" to draw that big hush and big deal awayers, and opted for what may be described as an "anti-celebrity" wedding set, not at the Manila Cathedral, but in the celebrity-to-wonder parish church of the basilic bowl of San Juan, Batangas.

80 guests

To uphold the solemnity and personal significance of the occasion, the couple did away with a lot of the attendant fuss and frolics that would usually surround a wedding, starting with the hundreds of VIPs who "have" to be invited to weddings and receptions.

Judy Ann and Ryan pared their list down to only 80, even if it meant missing the ire of "important" people. Now, that took guts.

In addition, Judy Ann made sure her estranged father was present, in the role of officiating her beloved mother. Happily, her mom later assured everyone she understood her daughter's need to be surrounded by her "complete" family on that important occasion, jokingly adding that she missed the symptoms to (maybe) become daddy up.

Lastly, with the "conflicted" nature of her parents' relationship, may have been one of the reasons that Judy Ann opted to do away with the traditional march down the aisle, deciding instead to walk to the altar by her lonesome.

Another reason may have been that, at 35, she felt she had become her own person, in her culinary walk credited this coudd dent sense of being.

'Silent' coup

It was similarly heartening to realize that the Agoncillos' "secret" wedding couldn't have been pulled off without the cooperation of all of the people who had been invited to the wedding. In local show biz, it's unheard of that people keep secrets, so the fact that the "silent" coup was pulled off is a tribute to the love that their relatives and friends have for the engaged couple.

For their part, Judy Ann and Ryan showcased the admirable art of making it all count for the rest of us, while others duty pulled it off. Instead of doing things by rote, they added personal touches to the occasion that made it distinctly feelingly their own.

It's just too bad that some people have known declining them for hosting the show July's baggage and schadenfreude that have weighed down so many celebrity weddings. Yes, that "you" (but public and by extension a fan, but they owe themselves—and deserve—much more.

No apologies

Before they became stars, they were persons. After their stellar careers ebb and recede, they said, they will still be persons—so, they are entitled to uphold their personhood above all other considerations on one of the most significant days of their lives. Thus, they have nothing to apologize for, and it's their union declared and ratified (as it should be) absolute.

The Agoncillos' desire to make their wedding true their own gives us hope, because it indicates that we have some say who don't allow their tuxedos to control and stifle them.

Korina not replaced

From page 01

show "Unwiser," follows from 8:00 to 10:00. The changes are temporary, said Boy Abunda, EP for Dhalia Radio and reports. Regular programming resumes when Pedro returns.

Another rookie told Inquirer she would co-host "Bandwidth" for a week when Pedro returns, adding that "school has to come first." She's still with Sandbox on "Band It." Marshall B. Cruz

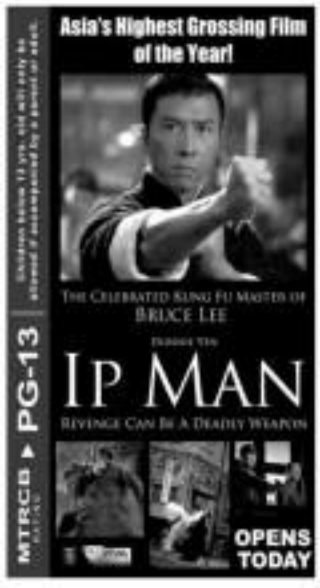
MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

METROPOLITAN MULTINATIONAL THEATRE ASSOCIATION

YOUR MOVIE GUIDE

Movies, Schedules Times Subject to Change without Prior Notice

Walter Mart



BDO

Shop with your
BDO Rewards Card
and enjoy **10% discount**
on all items at
SM Department Store

We've got it all for you!

SM DEPARTMENT STORE

May 4-7 and May 11-14
(Mondays thru Thursdays)